

THE WELSH REVIEW

Editor : GWYN JONES

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A SYMPOSIUM

on

THE WELSH LITERARY TRADITION

by

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Professor T. H. Parry-Williams

Professor G. J. Williams

Sir Ifor Williams

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LIFE AND LETTERS

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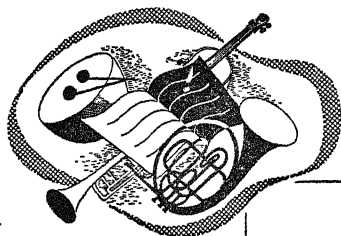
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LIFE AND LETTERS

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edited by Robert Herring

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EDITORIAL

January, 1948

WHEN, in November, I bade farewell 'with one foot in the Azores', I felt that those words did not say quite what I meant. I was not at all sure what that was, but I now know. The phrase was a Shakespearean echo, 'one foot on sea, one foot on shore,' and it nearly turned out to be prescient; at least, as regards the sea part of it, for we ran into head winds.

Head winds, I am now in a position to state, use delaying tactics. Ours, averaging sixty-six miles an hour, and at times reaching ninety, caused us to be fifteen hours late in touching down at the Palisadoes airfield, Kingston. From that plane, in which we had spent so much too much of our lives, we walked into a heat-wave so intense that Jamaicans presaged an earthquake.

That did not happen. Instead, we were greeted at our hotel by the roars of lions and the screams of their victims, for there was being thrown on a screen slung from palm-trees that Cecil B. de Mille opus, *The Sign of the Cross*. But this and *Henry V* at the Carib, were not the only things to remind us of England. The sky was blue, the sea was blue (and eighty degrees), humming birds pulsed on the flowers and pelicans watched us bathe. But the world which contained this contained much else as well—it was the same world we had left.

One felt at home; for there were strikes—of newspaper workers, with dockers' promised and shops threatening to come out before Christmas. There was a drought. There was, and will be for long, housing shortage. There is the Mayor, Bustamente, whom some regard as dictator, some demagogue, and all agree in calling half clown, half genius, which is at least fifty per cent more than one can say of his European equivalents. Even Mr. Strachey's buzzard-like shadow reached over the fair and fertile island . . . there was that unfortunate matter of bananas, and the no less awkward question of the prices paid for Cuban, as compared with Jamaican, sugar.

Kingston, Surrey (Jamaica), had very much the same topics troubling it as Kingston, Surrey (England)—in fact, one might say more, since Lord Beaverbrook had taken up residence at Montego Bay, along the coast. Palms, paw-paw, and poinsettia may ease the eye, and pineapple juice and Amber Jack (a fish, not a cocktail) take the edge off austerity, but Jamaica is rich, too, in problems and a study of these shows that they are the same the world over, so that to discuss the particular is in this instance inevitably to reflect on the general.

The greatest of these problems, and that from which most others stem, is lack of housing. For a Colonial capital, Kingston itself is a shock. And a short way out, on the Spanish Town road, you may see appalling slums, whole settlements of people, whom we are proud to call citizens of the British Empire, living in huts, and less-than-huts, made of cardboard, banana leaves, old petrol tins. The squalor is emphasized by the neatness of a large cemetery next to them, in which the sole living creature to gain any good from the space was a horse peacefully grazing among the graves. It is true that a short time ago there were no slums of quite this description, and that slums of all kinds have increased as the result of the rise in cost of building materials. Increased wages, responsible in part for this rise, have thus had an opposite effect from that intended. It is also true that our own slums in England have to be seen to be believed, and that even pre-fabs can scarcely be considered fitting habitations for those created in the image of God. One must never be merely sentimental, and strangers and visitors in particular must guard against that. Nevertheless, no civilized people should have to live as the very poor in Jamaican towns do live. Even where there are houses better than huts there is overcrowding—even in the country, where things are better. Overcrowding brings disease, sets at naught schemes for social betterment and, in a country where not so long ago planters ruled from magnificent mansions, the mental effects of insufficient homes can be imagined.

A problem which we have not and Jamaica has is unemployment. Despite this, there is lack of labour. But not only

this holds up housing. As contributory a cause is lack of water. It is ironical that a land whose name means 'many springs' should suffer in this way, but so it is. Each end of Jamaica is well-watered, but in the centre is a large belt lacking streams and dependent on rain. When the rain fails, life fails. From 1862 to 1865 no rain fell for three years, and then there were the Morant Bay riots, which were put down with bloodhounds. Last week disturbances here were quelled with tear gas. That may or may not be progress—at least no bloodshed was caused—but the basic question of adequate supply of water remains. Indeed, it gets worse. The break-up of large estates, the consequent neglect of irrigation, antique methods of agriculture, resulting in landslides, soil erosion, all play their part.

In Jamaica, as in England, new houses cannot be built, not only for lack of materials, but for lack of water. For this reason also full benefit is not reaped from the earth. Jamaica is not starving, as are so many countries to-day, but far too many do not have enough. Prices rise, poor transport hampers distribution, Panama disease has hit bananas, and there are not enough ships to ship them, even when they are good. All round, more could be produced than there is.

The war is to blame, of course. But you cannot blame wars for all evils, since it is evil itself which produces wars. Till they can be abolished (like other forms of slavery) shortages, want, and misery will be mankind's portion. Wars are not outlawed by ministers disagreeing at the public expense. They are stopped by a change of spirit, and that change has the best chance of emerging, not from conferences, but from a practical handling of immediate issues.

Of course, Jamaica feels that not enough has been done for her, and of course she is fertile soil for agitators, and in that mood is not always able to distinguish between the sincere and the cynical. The first country in the world where slavery was abolished, and the only one to-day free of colour prejudice, she nevertheless feels that the question is not so much Jamaica for the Jamaicans—of which only six per cent are white, of the remainder no less than seventy-eight per cent being black—as Jamaica for the Negroes.

Much is hoped from the Ten Year plan—but much may happen in ten years, apart from the achievement of that plan.

One of the things that has not yet happened particularly affects readers and writers not only in Jamaica, but the world over. There is as yet in Jamaica no general means of publishing books, such as exists in most other civilized countries in the world. That may sound hard of belief, but it is true. There is no firm in Jamaica which exists simply and solely to publish books. There is no branch of a British publisher. It is not much more than a hundred years—one hundred and ten, to be precise—since the end of slavery, but the fight against illiteracy has made enormous strides. The latest figures are that sixty (some officials say seventy-five) per cent of the population are now literatè. That is proportionately more than in Spain or Portugal. There are Jamaican authors, and have been for long, Constance Hollar, Claude McKaye, and Adolphe Roberts being perhaps the most famous. But there is no Jamaican publisher. Consequently, authors, such as the last two I named, go—when they can—to America. If a Jamaican poet wishes to produce his slim volume he has to do so at his own cost. One writer showed me an article which had lain in his desk for two years because there was no one to publish it. It does not occur to the owner of the biggest paper, which runs to well over twenty pages and has a coloured comic, to run a literary supplement. With the exception of the Phoenix Library, the bookshops are a disgrace, and though the Library of the Institute is alertly run and doing a magnificent job, it is, as so often happens in the Colonies, hampered by a bitterly laughable insufficiency of funds from Britain.

Until books can be published there can hardly be expected to be readers. A poet may write on a desert isle—and there are plenty here I would choose—but readers can't read, or develop in reading, without books. Radio in Jamaica reaches large audiences and can inculcate a liking for literature. The authors are there to create it. It remains for a platform to be provided.

I have no intention of announcing a Jamaican number consisting of hurriedly didactic observations by short-term visitors. But what I am going to do is to throw open these

EDITORIAL

pages to young Jamaican authors, such as Vivian Virtue, George Campbell, Victor Reid, Wycliff Bennett—poets, novelists, and journalists. When this will be I cannot say, for I have left other numbers behind me in England, and there are other islands ahead of me here. In fact, since beginning this Editorial, I have boarded another plane and flown a further thousand miles, via San Domingo, St. Kitts, and Antigua, to Barbados, where *both* feet are now firmly on shore (silver shore, sand of the coral composing this isle, reputed to be lost Atlantis), till we take off again for new lands, and New Years, but the same problems ever.

THOMAS GRAY AT CAMBRIDGE

From "Two Quiet Lives"

LORD DAVID CECIL

(NOTE.—*This is the second of two excerpts we have been allowed to take from Lord David Cecil's new book, published by Constable. The first, which we printed last month, concerned Gray at Eton. The other 'life' of the title is that of Dorothy Osborne.*—EDITOR.)

FURTHER, he did not at first take to Cambridge. This is hardly to be wondered at. An English University of the time was no place for the civilized spirit, as Gibbon was to find forty years later. Cambridge, when Gray went there, was a stagnant backwater, cut off from the flowing mainstream of contemporary culture, a sort of stuffy unspiritual monastery, ruled over by an inert mass of stodgy celibates—how smugly their bewigged countenances still stare down at us from the panelled walls of combination rooms—who, having risen from narrow circumstances to achieve their Fellowships, had relaxed for the rest of their lives into a monotonous existence of over-eating, over-drinking, and petty College business. Now and again a distinguished scholar appeared among them. But for the most part, their intellectual standards were low. Promotion went by patronage; so that a man might be made a Professor in a subject he knew nothing about, just because he had known how to flatter and pull strings in the right quarter. As for the ordinary College tutor, he was often an idle, ignorant man, who scarcely bothered to see his pupils more than twice in the term. Fancy, thought Gray, being put under the direction of a drunken illiterate like Mr. Birkett! As a matter of fact, even if he had approved of Mr. Birkett, Gray would not have much enjoyed working under him. For he found the curriculum uninspiring; a dry old-fashioned logic-chopping affair, involving a good deal of mathematics and

metaphysics, 'and with nothing in it' to appeal to the poetic spirit. 'Must I plunge into metaphysics?' he complained to West. 'Alas, I cannot see in the dark: nature has not furnished me with the optics of a cat. Must I pore upon mathematics? Alas, I cannot see in too much light: I am no eagle. It is very possible that two and two make four, but I would not give four farthings to demonstrate this ever so clearly; and if these be the profits of life, give me the amusements of it.'

Nor did the company of his fellow students offer much compensation for the deficiencies of the dons and the curriculum. Undergraduates were divided mainly into two classes. Of these, the scions of the aristocracy occupied such time as they spent at Cambridge in racing by day, and by night revelling round the streets, breaking the heads of unoffending townsmen: while the rest—dons and country parsons in embryo—sat about in an atmosphere of beer and tobacco smoke, exchanging trivial gossip, and ponderous jokes. Gray was too poor to associate with the aristocrats, even had he wanted to. Now and again, however, he was drawn into the company of the others. In a letter to Walpole he expatiates on his sufferings there.

'Do not imagine me pent up in a room hired for the purpose, and none of the largest, from 7 o'clock at night, till 4 in the morning! 'midst hogheads of liquor and quantities of tobacco, surrounded by 30 of these creatures, infinitely below the meanest people you could ever form an idea of; toasting bawdy health and deafened with their unmeaning roar; Jesus! but I must tell you of a fat mortal who stuck close to me. . . . Well! he was so maudlin and so loving, and told me long stories interrupted by the sourest interjections, with moral discourses upon God knows what; I was almost drunk too. . . . You will think it a strange compliment when I tell you how often I thought of you, all the while: but will forgive me when you recollect that it was a great piece of philosophy in me to be able, in the midst of noise and disturbance, to call to mind the most agreeable thing in the world.'

As was to be expected in these circumstances, Gray spent most of his time by himself, musing his way through the streets to lectures under the low-lying Cambridge sky, or in the

ancient quiet of his College rooms, reading, learning Italian, and playing toccatas and sarabands on the pianoforte.

It does not sound such an unsuitable life for him in its minor-key way. After all, his occupations were congenial; he liked learning Italian and playing the pianoforte. Indeed, these particular years, too, turned out profitable to his mental development. Their very emptiness gave him room to cultivate those æsthetic and literary interests in which his creative impulse was to find fulfilment: their very silence enabled him to listen more attentively to the immaterial voices of the mighty dead, of Milton, and Tasso, Horace and Racine, Spenser and Mme. de Sevigne. For he soaked himself in the literature of many ages and nations. Under their enriching influence his taste refined itself, his imaginative life acquired shape, strength, amplitude.

Nor was it as if he felt more at home in other places; amid the sordid quarrellings of his Mother's house in Cornhill, or staying with his sporting Uncle at Burnham Beeches—an object of contempt, because he read and walked when he could have been out with the hounds, and where he was forced to write his letters standing up, because all the chairs were occupied by his Uncle's stinking, barking dogs. Cambridge, with all its defects, was better than this. As the years passed, though he hardly liked to admit it, the place began to get a hold on him. When he got an invitation to go away, he found himself disinclined to accept it. 'I don't know how it is, I have a sort of reluctance to leave this place, unamiable as it may seem. It is true Cambridge is very ugly, the Town is very dirty, and very dull, but I am like a cabbage, where I am stuck I love to grow.'

Moreover with the years some of the chief ills which at first he complained of at Cambridge began to disappear. He had contrived, with the help of the despised Mr. Birckett, to persuade the authorities to allow him to give up taking a degree, in spite of the fact that he was receiving a scholarship from them; so that he could now devote himself undisturbed to the studies he liked. And he began to find a few kindred spirits in the place, notably a comfortable, kindly scholarly man called Wharton, and a pleasant, vigorous little scholar named

Brown. He managed, too, to keep up his connection with the Quadruple Alliance. Ashton was at Cambridge. And though he seems to have grown steadily less attractive with the years—sedulously planning his career, pompously fussing lest he had unconsciously offended someone who could obstruct his advancement—yet Ashton was an original member of the group with whom one could recall time past, and laugh at the old jokes. With Walpole and West, Gray maintained his connection mainly by letters. Not entirely though; now and again the door of his rooms would open and in flashed Walpole, voluble and intimate as ever, and bubbling over with fascinating news about the newest Italian castrato singer, or the latest scandal in high society. Gray loved hearing about high society, or indeed about any society. One of his chief pleasures in talking to Walpole arose from the fact that Walpole acted as a link between his friend's solitude and the world, that Walpole alone Gray could share vicariously, in that easy intercourse with his fellow man which in reality he found so difficult. He enjoyed this the more because it was intercourse in surroundings so agreeable to his imagination. Beauty did not have to be solemn to please Gray. He was very susceptible to the decorative quality in fashionable life, its frills and pretty fopperies, and he had an eye for their details. With what delighted precision does he observe Queen Caroline's costume, watching the opera; 'in a green velvet sac, embroidered on the facings and sleeves with silver, and a little French cap, and big black hood, and her hair in curls round her face.' He was full of the blue and gold *jeux d'artifices* that adorned the new production of Handel's 'Atlanta'. Walpole was the only one of his friends equally interested in these frivolities. Walpole, too, was the only one who could tell him about them. Routs, balls, masquerades—Gray wanted to hear about everything.

'Thou dear envious Imp,' he exclaimed to him, 'to set me a longing with accounts of plays and operas, and masquerades, after hearing of which, I can no more think of Logick and stuff, than you could of Divinity at a ball, or of Caudle and Carraway-Comfits, after having been stuffed at a Christening: heaven knows! we have nobody in our College that has seen London, but one; and he, I believe, comes out of Vinegar-yard, and looks like toasted Cheshire cheese, strewed

with brown Sugar. I beg you, give me the minutest Circumstances of your Diversions and your Indiversions; tho' if it is as great a trouble to you to write, as it is a pleasure to me to get 'em my heart, I fear I shan't hear from you once in a twelvemonth, and, dear now, be very punctual and very long.'

Indeed absence only served to increase the unique glamour with which, in Gray's eyes, Walpole's figure was irradiated. How wonderful it was to find a friend as fastidious and fussy as himself—Walpole rushes to him for sympathy when he is forced to spend a dreadful week in the sporting atmosphere of his Father's country house—who was yet somehow possessed of the *savoir faire* and zest for living which he, Gray, longed for and lacked.

'I am sufficiently awake to answer your letter,' he told him, 'though likely to be more dull than you write in sleep: and indeed I do not believe that you ever are so much asleep, but you can write to a relation, play a sober game of piquet, keep to a tête-à-tête conversation, seal a bargain, or perform any of the little offices of life with tolerable spirit: certain I am there are many people in the world who in their deep spirits are no better awake than you are at four in the morning reclined upon your pillow.'

Of course the very fact that his friend was such a brilliant figure imposed a certain strain in Gray's relations with him. It is to be noted in the foregoing quotation that Gray apologizes for being dull. At all costs he felt he must avoid dullness, if he was to be worthy of Walpole's interest in him. His letters to him now cast in the form of a mock oriental tale, now in that of an epistle from a god-daughter, now interspersed with verses, now expressed in a comic parody of Shakespearean English—are elaborate essays in the art of entertainment; frothy, sparkling confections, in which he has exercised himself to put all his powers of wit and fancy, and from which anything which might be thought boring is carefully excluded. Walpole, not unnaturally, accepted the version of Gray's character thus carefully presented to him. Humour he took to be Gray's natural mood. His gravity he dismissed as a mere trick of manner, and his occasional sighs of melancholy as pardonable affectations.

West was in no danger of falling into this error. For, if Walpole provided a link between Gray and the outer world, West was the companion of his inner life. Not that their relations were without rubs. They met very seldom, not more than twice in three years. And on one of these occasions at least, they were too shy to feel completely easy with one another. 'West sup'd with me the night before I came out of town,' Gray related, 'we both fancied at first we had a great many things to say to one another; but when it came to the push, I found, I had forgot all I intended to say, and he stood upon Punctilios and would not speak first, and so we parted.' There is a caustic truthfulness about this account which is a little formidable. It was characteristic of Gray though. Critical and insecure, he was always, as it were, taking the temperature of his friendships to see if they were providing the requisite warmth and light. If they were not, he was not the man to try and hide it from himself. However, the affection between him and West was too deep to be impaired by one awkward interview. Within a month he is writing to him as affectionately as ever. Though Gray always tries to be agreeable his letters to West were both franker and graver than those to Walpole. He writes a great deal about scholarship and literature, sends verses for West's criticism, or comments on verses West has sent to him. Together they lamented the aridness of intellectual life at their respective Universities. 'Sure it was of this place now Cambridge,' exclaimed Gray, 'but formerly known as Babylon, that the prophet spoke when he said "that the wild beasts of the forests shall dwell there, and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures".' To West, Gray allowed himself to betray his troubled mind, as he could not do to Walpole: and now and again the emotional tone deepened as with a charming, shy smile, Gray revealed that he is writing to one of the very few human beings he loved. 'As the most undeserving people in the world most often have the vanity to wish somebody had a regard for them, so I need not wonder at my own in being pleased that you care about me. You need not doubt, therefore, of having a first row in the front box of my little heart, and I believe that you are in no danger of being crowded there.'

TWO QUIET LIVES

West responded ardently to these declarations. Unlike his friends, he was unreserved: and he was touchingly pleased to find that anyone cared for him. Since leaving Eton, his life had been even drearier than Gray's. He had no old friends at all at Oxford, and he shrank too much from the novelty of making new ones. Besides, he was a tenderer plant than Gray. There was nothing in him of that fundamental self-discipline and solidity of mind that enabled Gray to construct a life of fruitful study out of the loneliness of Cambridge. Wretched health—West was a victim of acute attacks of headache, which, while they lasted, prostrated him completely—had increased the natural weakness of a disposition high strung, unconcentrated and the prey to waves of black despair, in which joy, youth, life itself, seemed to be slipping through his nerveless fingers, gleaming and unsubstantial as the waters of a stream. He could not bring himself to get down to any regular work. Only as he wandered forlornly by the willows and fritillaries of Addison's Walk, while Magdalen Tower chimed out the melancholy hours overhead, brooding endlessly over those Eton days when alone he had been happy, his overburdened heart sighed itself forth in a strain of elegiac sadness.

Saint of this learned awful grove,
While slow along thy walks I rove,
The pleasing scene, which all that see
Admire, is lost to me.

The thought, which still my breast invades,
Nigh yonder springs, nigh yonder shades,
Still, as I pass, the memory brings
Of sweeter shades and springs.

Lost and inwrought in thought profound,
Absent I tread Etonian ground;
Then starting from the dear mistake,
As disenchanted, wake.

What though from sorrow free, at best
I'm thus but negatively blest:
Yet still, I find, true joy I miss:
True joy's a social bliss.

LORD DAVID CECIL

Oh! How I long again with those,
Whom first my boyish heart had chose,
Together through the friendly shade
To stray, as once I stray'd!
Their presence would the scene endear
Like paradise would all appear,
More sweet around the flowers would blow,
More soft the waters flow.

No wonder he was grateful to Gray when he said he loved him. 'I singled you out for a friend,' West cried passionately, 'and I would have you know me to be yours if you deem me worthy—alas Gray, you cannot imagine how miserably my time passes away; my health and nerves and spirits are, I thank my stars, the very worst in Oxford . . . give me leave to say I find no physic comparable to your letters.'

Gray could sympathize with West's lamentations. His own feelings were, at times, all too similar. Since leaving school his own prevailing mood had been a melancholy one. It was nothing like so acute as West's. *Ennui*, a sense of emptiness, apathy, a sort of greyness of the spirit which prevented him enjoying anything completely, were its characteristics. 'When you have seen one of my days,' he writes, 'you have seen a whole year of my life. They go round and round like a blind horse in the mill, only he has the satisfaction of fancying he makes progress, and gets some ground: my eyes are open enough to see the same dull prospect, and having made four and twenty steps more, I shall now be just where I was.' And again, 'low spirits are my true and faithful companions. They get up with me, go to bed with me, make journeys and returns as I do; nay, and to pay visits, and will even affect to be jocose, and share a feeble laugh with me, but most commonly alone together, and are the prettiest insipid company in the world.'

The origin of this melancholy of Gray's is to be found partly in a constitutional languor of temperament, partly in that fundamental suspicion of life engendered in him by too early an acquaintance with its power to hurt. Latent during his school days, it was bound to make itself felt when he was first as a man compelled to confront the world. The world—it loomed up before his troubled, adolescent gaze, a bewildering,

dangerous place, in which his shrinking spirit felt incurably alien. His mode of life did nothing to reconcile him to it. Poverty and solitude encourage despondency. The monastic seclusion in which he lived made him shyer than ever. Why did he feel disinclined to leave Cambridge, since he found it so dull? Because leaving it meant venturing into a hostile region, where nothing was to be had which he felt worth winning. Instead he devoted himself to study. This, as we have seen, was good for him: in it, the intellectual half of his nature found fulfilment; this was why he was not as unhappy as West. But he was not sufficiently impersonal to be completely satisfied by intellectual activity. He needed the sweetness of human contact, he needed love. If he had been a normal young man he would at this stage in his development have fallen in love. But Gray was very far from being a normal young man. Stiff and academic, he was embarrassed in the company of young women, checked by what he felt to be his lack of worldly polish. He could not bear to imagine himself taking part in any love affair unless it was conducted with elegant ease. And how in the world was he, of all people, to acquire elegant ease? When Walpole wrote to tell him about an amorous intrigue in which he was engaged, Gray replied, with a forced jauntiness of tone which ill concealed his painful sense of inferiority, that he had sometimes considered embarking on a similar adventure himself, but that he had, in the end, come to the conclusion that he was not equipped for it.

'Would you believe it, 'tis the very thing I would wish to apply to myself. Ay! as simply as I stand here. But then the apparatus necessary to it calls for so much; nay, a part of it is wholly out of one's power to procure. Then who should pare one, and burnish one? For they would have more trouble and fuss with me than Cinderaxa's sisters had with their feet to make 'em fit for the little glass slipper. Oh yes! to be sure, one must be licked; now to lick oneself I take altogether impracticable, and to ask another to lick one, would not be quite so civil. Bear I was born, and bear I believe I am likely to remain.'

Gray was further inhibited in these matters by the fact that relations with a woman meant adventure, meant plunging

into that risky, earthy world of adult manhood, where he felt so out of place. Nor was it natural for him to take the masculine and dominant rôle expected in such a relationship. Native temperament and childish experience had combined to make him neither dominant nor masculine where his personal emotions were concerned. In consequence of all this, his capacity for romantic sentiment tended to be diverted into his feeling for his old friends, for West and Walpole. These feelings, though deep and productive at moments of an exquisite happiness, could not fully satisfy the needs of his heart. The relationships involved in them were careful, delicate, precarious affairs of rarefied sentiment and subtle intellectual sympathies, liable to be disturbed by the slightest breath in discord, and quite unable either to bring him down to earth, or to dispel his sense of insecurity. His suspicion of life remained, and with it his lack of spirits.

It was in no sanguine mood, therefore, that in September, 1738, Gray packed his boxes to leave Cambridge. He had to go; if he was ever to mend his worldly fortunes, he must take up a profession. But what profession? Unenthusiastically he considered the Bar. West was thinking of this too. Perhaps they might make a start together. Even so Gray did not find the prospect exhilarating. However, before anything was fixed, something happened which changed his plans entirely. Sir Robert Walpole, in accordance with Whig tradition, was sending Walpole abroad to finish his education by a protracted grand tour of the Continent. Now Walpole wrote and asked Gray to come with him as his guest. There could be no question of a refusal. To see with his own eyes all the historical places and famous works of art, which for so many years had filled his imagination; to see them in the company of dearest Walpole, and on a journey where he would travel in the greatest possible comfort—this was a chance not to be missed. At the end of March, 1739, the two young men were across the Channel. They were not back again till 1741.

A SONG FOR A COLD MONTH

(For E.)

by ROY McFADDEN

Hunger preaches sermons to the stones.
I walk the ringing roads with you and speak
Of those who carried fire within their bones
And burned a pathway through the ice and snow.
Remember them in winter: the keen flames
That melted ice to reach forgotten worlds.
Remember them, and make a song of names,
A rosary to ease these famine days.

Hunger preaches sermons to the stones.
I walk the ringing roads with you and cry
That thought is climate, and that ice is true;
That frozen hearts create a frozen sky.
But, naming those who made miraculous fire
And challenged every icicle's disdain,
I say the heart's December carries spring
As every hill implies, somewhere, a plain.

But hunger preaches sermons to the stones.
I walk the ringing roads with you and hear
The harsh stones stir, a gathering of bones,
And guiltily withdraw the facile phrase,
The consolation for the wind-whipped mind,
And, star-cold on the hard heel-chiming road,
I hear my bones acknowledging their kind,
And know that winter's winter still in spring.

UNPUBLISHED SWINBURNE

(New verses; evolution of Swinburne's early poetry; scandal of his posthumous literary fortunes; an unnoticed love-affair.)

RANDOLPH HUGHES

I write thus words for you, before the moon
Sows with waste silver half the saddened sea:
While one weak wind, the prisoner of some tree,
Flutters its wing and weeps, unhappiest
Of all the late year's plumeless brood that rest
A summer through, then tremble and awake;
With its keen sobs the grievèd grey poplars shake,
Angering the water-shadows; and a cloud
Across the narrowed rim of hill is bowed
Like one who listens. Are you sad to-night
With dear Italian distances in sight
To comfort in despite of rain and foam?
Faint stems are gladdened with warm remains of bloom,
And hills the night makes beautiful and blind
Console the ruined cities: no vague wind
Feels for the withered leaves that are to be
Garnered and laid this winter. Here's my sea
Pleads with October in appealing fret
Disquiets the damp sand with spasm and jet,
Takes heart and loses, settles it all with sleep—
Live snakes of evil white that hiss and creep
Coiled sullenly across its back. Within
(As listless talk of unrepented sin
Between two sinners) steadily persist
Those unrejoicing noises, seldom missed
Such nights as these in England; the small town
Chatters and scrawls its purpose out in brown,
Searing with steam the hill's dead naked shape:
By juts of hurt impatience lets escape
Quick sighs of fire from chimnied engine-works,
A dismal and diseased contrivance lurks
In each, as each one were the place's chance
To free the trouble of its broken clans
In clear speech spoken once for all, so tried
Let out the secret ere its flame subside.

UNPUBLISHED SWINBURNE

You know the rest: a broad white stream is fed
With sidelong flowers, weak in stalk and head,
And bridged with eager wind-bewildered trees;
From the room's window where I write one sees
The town at work, the meadow and the hills;
Step by weak step, the long mist fills and fills
From sea to river; that thin moonlight grows
Mere shadow, shrunk and leaner as it flows
Between the flowing water and wet shore; ¹

Any unprinted composition of a master poet, however fugitive and fragmentary, and whatever its intrinsic value, is interesting, and its publication calls for no apologia. But it will be agreed that the preceding lines of an unfinished poem are more than merely interesting in a rather idle sense of the word. In them is much of the subtly suggestive, tenuously delicate, highly alembicated beauty that is peculiarly Swinburnian, and is particularly characteristic of the early period of which the first *Poems and Ballads* is the best known expression for the great majority of readers. These qualities will come as nothing new to the general run of those who have a sympathetic knowledge of the poet. But there is something else that is perhaps even more notable and will probably cause some surprise. Show any well-read man the following lines and ask him to make a guess who wrote them:

... the small town
Chatters and scrawls its purpose out in brown,
Searing with steam the hill's dead naked shape:
By juts of hurt impatience lets escape
Quick sighs of fire from chimnied engine-works,
A dismal and diseased contrivance lurks
In each ...

It is a hundred to one he will think of D. H. Lawrence, or at

¹ Here follow two and a half lines through which run two diagonal strokes indicating cancellation:

Like a wan brand of colour tried to score
The ripples over foam by foam, but found
Feeble, and melted to a stain

Tried in the first of these lines replaces a cancelled *meant*. There are numerous deletions and corrections throughout the whole of the poem.

least the poetic climate of which the latter is the chief representative. 'Some modern anyhow' would be thought a safe reply. And yet the verses in question were written over eighty years ago in the now fashionably despised Victorian age in its dreadful middle years. To those few, however, who know Swinburne really well even the quality of these lines will be in no way surprising. Stark terse unsparing, almost brutal (but never brutish as in much of the so-called art of the 'moderns') realism is not uncommon in his work in all stages of his career. Even his most exquisitely subtle and rarefied poetry, that in which there is a sort of other-dimensional strangeness, often takes on a quality of sharp hardness.

Naked as brown feet of unburied men,

from the first volume he published ¹ is one example out of hundreds. Another example in prose, a passage registering his disappointment with the scenery of the Riviera, which then as now was almost sacrosanct for tourists of the ordinary sort:

A calcined, scalped, rasped, scraped, flayed, broiled, powdered, leprous, blotched, mangy, grimy, parboiled country *without* trees, water, grass, fields—*with* blank, beastly, senseless olives and orange-trees like a mad cabbage gone indigestible; it is infinitely liker hell than earth, and one looks for tails among the people. And such females with hunched bodies and crooked necks carrying tons on their heads, and looking like Death taken seasick.—(Letter to Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, 19th January, 1861.)

He could easily have beaten D. H. Lawrence at his own game (including that of erotic psychology, as will be more evident when I bring out his novel *Lesbia Brandon*, which the prud-hommesque old-maidishness of Gosse and Wise decided should be withheld from the world). And he could have beaten others of contemporary repute at theirs had he thought it worth while. The more one learns of Swinburne, the more one is inclined to regard him as omniscient.²

¹ *The Queen-Mother and Rosamond*, September, 1860.

² I would not be thought to disparage the work of D. H. Lawrence. On the contrary, I think him one of the few men of real genius of his time, and I deprecate the present tendency to make little of him. I merely wish to make the point that Swinburne anticipated him in certain lines, and that he far exceeded him as an artist. (He was far greater, for one thing, because, while

The manuscript of this fragment is in the Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds (to the Librarian, and especially the sub-Librarian, of which I am indebted for much helpful courtesy). It had previously belonged to T. J. Wise, who, as recorded by himself, had purchased all the surviving manuscripts of Swinburne's unpublished writings a few days after the poet's death. The interval was indecently short; but this is only a minor feature of a transaction that it is hard not to regard as a crime. It was arranged, says Wise, that he 'should print or publish' these manuscripts 'in whatever manner he thought fit'. The leaving of such a trust to the sense of fitness of such an unlettered and indelicate dealer as Wise was a tragically comic act, a disservice to friendship and genius, for which Watts-Dunton must always be held unforgivable. 'This plan was duly carried into execution,' Wise continues with pursy complacency; 'duly' is rich in more senses than one; and if from one, and the only important point of view, it is mendacious, from another it is quite exact: the arrangement was

no less capable than Lawrence in conveying aspects of life or nature in which the latter specialized, he was incomparably more considerable as a master of style in the highest and strictest sense of the word. Lawrence's chief weakness as an artist was in respect of form in the actual business of writing, considered as something more than simply instrumental to the conveying of information or the telling of a story or other ends lying outside itself; writing considered, particularly, as the collocation of vocables, sentence structure, the art of the Word in its most specific and esoteric meaning, as understood by such men as Flaubert, say, who were writers first and other things after, however much other things counted for them even within their artistic scope. Rhythm is the primary quality in writing of this essential kind. There are many elements of beauty in much of Lawrence's work; but he had no instinct working imperatively towards felicities of perfection in rhythm, which is as expressive as—nay, more expressive than—any of the other resources upon which an artist can draw. Architectonic and music were not among the exigencies of his nature (especially when he was writing in prose). Hence his rhythms are nearly always flaccid, pebbly, *décousu*—mere juxtapositions of harmonically unrelated words that combine into no larger unities of life. This, on the contrary, is one of the things in which Swinburne always shows unfailing supremacy.)

I may mention that in *Lucretia Borgia* (Golden Cockerel Press, 1942) I have less cursorily than here drawn attention to the strong element of realism in the work of Swinburne, who is commonly thought of as only a lyrical writer, and one very much in the clouds far away from anything that receives realistic attention. In that volume, too, I have made redressive estimates in several other directions; indeed, I have there, in the guise of a Commentary and Notes, attempted what is largely a novel evaluation of the poet—a thing that is far from being superfluous.

carried out fully in accord with his own standard of fitness. He later admitted Gosse to partnership in deciding what of Swinburne's unpublished remains should be printed or suppressed or left to go untraceably astray by sale for filthy lucre. And therewith the tragic comicality was raised to a higher power.

Lafourcade, in his cyclopedic doctoral thesis *La Jeunesse de Swinburne* (1928), also makes it clear that the manuscript was in Wise's Ashley Collection, of which Wise allowed him to have the run. He gives it curt mention in a footnote, where he quotes three and a half lines of it, and elsewhere he lists it as belonging to the Ashley Collection. And yet Wise himself, in *A Swinburne Library* (1925), professedly an exhaustive catalogue of all the Swinburne items in his possession, makes no sort of reference to it at all! This is typical of the procedure of this huckster, who tried to fob himself off on the world as a great bibliographer, and did so very successfully. What his motive was in suppressing reference to this manuscript can only be conjectured...

I myself only learned of the present whereabouts of the manuscript by a happy accident; and only thus can be discovered the locality of many of the holographs peddled more or less furtively by Wise. I mention these details to show that, thanks to this trader, work on or for Swinburne is very seriously disabled; often, owing to the loss or untraceability of the manuscripts, it is impossible to ascertain watermarks (if any) and cancelled matter indicating stages of progress, in the case of the published writings; a much more important thing, the publication of certain *inédits* must be postponed indefinitely—if it is ever to be effected at all.

Wise not only without due record trafficked in Swinburne's manuscripts (sometimes even criminally disconcerting a work and selling separate sheets), but he also had typed copies made and put these up for sale too. The great majority of the Swinburne *inédits* in the Brotherton Collection, for instance, come from this part of his stock-in-trade, a delightfully facile source of increments to his very large fortune. Usually these copies, in the rare cases where they can be collated with the manuscripts, turn out to contain many errors of transcription. (This

is piquant, in view of Wise's magisterial pronouncement that 'it would have been utterly impossible for Watts-Dunton, even with the aid of his secretary, to have deciphered and prepared for the press' the manuscripts which he unconscionably—for the tidy sum of £2,000—allowed to pass into the hands of this pedlar.)

Hence another difficulty for those who wish to inspect or bring out Swinburne's unpublished writings; even when, in default of the manuscripts, these typescript copies of them are available, it can never be certain that they are reliable; and there is a danger that they may be taken at their untrustworthy face value by some unwary or unscrupulous investigator and printed as altogether genuine work of the poet. One wonders how many of these typescript errors have been thus perpetuated in the copies of many unpublished items 'printed for private circulation' by Wise, and enticingly limited to a very small number varying from ten to two or three score (which means that for the quasi-totality of would-be readers they are still as good as unpublished). (The fact that Gosse had a hand in these ventures does not make for reassurance. On the contrary: he was even more a malefactor than Wise where Swinburne was concerned, for with him malice helped out the effects of incapacity.) This doubt applies no less to ordinary editions of unpublished material brought out by these two in partnership; the volume of *Posthumous Poems*, for instance, and, in the Bonchurch edition of the works (with grotesque dishonesty called 'complete'), the letters and various other compositions. There is no saying where there may not be misreadings in the considerable body of work to which we refer; and, to make things worse, Gosse and Wise, at least in the case of the letters, flagitiously took it upon themselves to suppress whole passages without in any way indicating that such an outrage had been committed. Altogether, owing to the incompetence and worse than incompetence of this pair, Swinburnian affairs have been very largely bedevilled. And Swinburnian scholarship will in consequence be not a little embarrassed for a long time to come in so far as it has to do with work whose publication or non-publication was a matter of their good pleasure.

These atrabiliar general reflections are inevitable as soon as one occupies oneself seriously with the *inédits*. The facts giving rise to them are a part of the history of the fragment now published for the first time.

On some few occasions Wise sold one of his stock of typescripts along with the original manuscript (probably urging it upon the purchaser as indispensable in the case of such bad handwriting as the poet's). This fortunately happened where our fragment was concerned; so that here one could check the typescript. Collation, of course, brought a number of errors to light; some of which showed that as transcribed by Wise Swinburne was no respecter of sense and grammar. That is not all. At the top of Wise's copy the poem bears a full and informative title:

AN EPISTLE IN VERSE
Addressed to
Pauline, Lady Trevelyan.

And at the end there is a note that obligingly gives further information from the rich treasury of his knowledge:

'This "Epistle" was written by Swinburne at Oxford, and was addressed to Pauline, Lady Trevelyan, then touring in Italy.'

Now all this is absolutely and impudently gratuitous, and reposes upon nothing that can be called a fact. The title, which masquerades as being the poet's own, is a pure invention of Wise's interloping fancy. There is no title, no word of heading, on the holograph as Swinburne left it. And nothing whatsoever supports the categorical information given in the note and in part reproduced in the title. Research (which it may be safely assumed Wise never made) may or may not reveal that Lady Trevelyan was sojourning in Italy at the time the poem was written; that is, supposing we knew when it was written, but there is no absolute certitude concerning this; there is no positive information that the date even falls within the fairly wide period of Swinburne's years at the University (the paper bears no watermark date, which would at least fix a time before which the lines could not have been written); and in any case there is no scrap of evidence of any kind that they were addressed to this elderly friend of the poet; on the con-

trary, there is very good reason for believing that they were not, as we shall show at a later stage of the argument.

All this is typical of Wise. Reckless levity is constant with him. His incompetence is almost incredibly gross in every direction (except that of making money). He cannot be trusted to do even the most menial bibliographical tasks—he cannot be trusted even not to make a mess of dates. Anything that he says is subject to the greatest stringency of caution.

It is also typical of Lafourcade (whose thesis on Swinburne is a monument of inaptitude and ineptitude) that, with regard to this poem, he should follow the guidance of Wise, whom he reveres as one of the great masters of bibliography. In two separate sections of his book he gives it a title, *Fragment of an Epistle*, in italics, as though it belonged to the manuscript; and in a third section he refers to it as *Epistle to some one* [*sic*] in Italy, again in italics, as though this too were part of what was written by Swinburne. But he goes no further than this in positive (and very wobbly) reproduction of Wise's invention in the matter of the title; he does not entirely swallow the latter's affirmation that the poem is addressed to Lady Trevelyan; he merely suggests this as a possibility, giving no reason for doing so, and altogether failing to see any of the considerations that tell heavily against it, although some at least of these were writ large in documents which came under his observation.

He again takes his cue from Wise as regards the date, and here his wobbling is still more remarkable. In the first of his three references to the poem he assigns it to Swinburne's Oxford period, but refrains from more precise dogmatism, and is content to say that it 'seems' to date from 1858-59 (an assumption for which he provides not even a shadow of a reason); in the second reference he abandons the imprecision of period dating, and categorically gives 1859 as the time of composition (again of course with nothing to support his assertion); and then, in the third reference, oblivious of his previous statements, he no less categorically (and with the same perfect gratuitousness) says that it belongs to 1857! Such self-stultifying incompetence must be unique in the universal history of duncery; but it is far from being unique in the work

of Professor Lafourcade, whose elucubration on Swinburne was adjudged worthy of the highest degree in the gift of the French University system.

Wise, Gosse, and Lafourcade: these three 'authorities' on Swinburne are the three greatest blights in the field of Swinburnian studies. They have done much more harm to his interests than any of those who have come out as his enemies.

Having scavenged away the encumbering errors of Wise and his French acolyte we must do what we can with our own wits.

As for the date of the poem, it can with reasoned confidence be said that it belongs to a fairly early period in Swinburne's poetic career. That is indicated by the general æsthetic effect: quality of imagination, poetic idiom, *doigté*, etc.—impressionistic considerations that are necessarily somewhat indefinite and so are in no final way probative. But it is also indicated by two facts that are really quite definite:

(1) The rhyming of *wind* with *blind*. I think I am right in saying that in the whole course of the work published by himself he never gives this rhyme value to *wind*; not even in long stanzas where he needs half a dozen or so rhymes in *-ind* with a long *i*, and might be tempted to fall back on this 'poetic' pronunciation of *wind*. From the earliest of his published poems he seems to have formed the resolution not to make use of this licence. And so in these poems we always find *wind* rhyming with *thinned*, *bedinned*, etc. In the early unpublished work, on the other hand, the pronunciation with long *i* occurs in at least four poems besides this unfinished fragment.

(2) The leaving of the first line without any companion one rhyming with it. Swinburne in his maturity was strongly opposed to anything such, to anything in the nature of free verse (he even denounced *vers libre* effects in Tennyson's *Maud*; this arose from his respect for æsthetic law, which increased as his powers advanced into greatness); and there is nothing such, nothing really irregular, in any work which he himself published. On the other hand, in at least one unpublished poem, *A Woman's Hair*, there are many lines left in the air as far as rhyme goes; but only in this respect: there is nothing

fragmentary in the structure, and the sense runs on continuously through unrhymed and rhymed lines to grammatical completeness, and such stanzaic unity as there is appears to be complete.

Impressionistic considerations, then, point to what may be called the first period of Swinburne's poetic maturity; and these two facts point to a date that is certainly anterior to the time he had his first volume of rhyming poems ready for the press. Can we obtain further precision? The only way to do so is to look for some datable work that shows marked affinity with what we shall conveniently call the Epistle. Now, parts of the posthumously published *Death of Sir John Franklin* do so, I think, more than anything else that may be brought forward. Lines such as the following, for example:

Where the waste sullen shadow of steep capes
Narrows across the cloudy-coloured brine,
And by strong jets the angered foam escapes;
And a sad touch of sun scores the sea-line
Right at the middle motion of the noon
And then fades sharply back, and the cliffs shine
Fierce with keen snows against a kindled moon
In the hard purple of the bitter sky . . .
Out in some barren creek of the cold seas,
Where the slow shapes of the grey water-weed
Freeze midway as the languid inlets freeze . . .

* * *

With the chill washing edges of dull sea—

Here we have a striking similarity of touch, texture, tone, atmosphere, of general poetic impression—as much as between any two pieces in the whole of Swinburne. As a no less striking contrast, compare *The Temple of Janus*, another early poem that the author never published:

. . . The motions of the music-winged stars,
The silence of the splendour-paven sea
Ere winds awake its many-voiced glee,
The sound and shade of forests, the swift gleams
And echoes of the everlasting streams,
These have I loved with such delight and awe
As guides them calmly by its ancient law
On their glad way unaltering; change and pain

RANDOLPH HUGHES

At their mute bidding loose the wonted chain;
By their bright guidance was I led to see
Hope and those winged memories which to thee
Are life and holiest strength, O Liberty!...

* * *

... The fair Spring-hours
In dew-lit gleams and April-coloured showers
Dissolving, stained with light the hueless air;
Others went out in tempest and the glare
Of downward lightning. Last, one fair shape came;
Her wild white pinions vibrated like flame;
Her eyes were keen and earnest, as they saw
Strange things beyond our sight, of deeper joy and awe...

Here we are in a different world of poetic values; this poem is much more Shelleyan than Swinburnian; in fact there is hardly anything specifically Swinburnian about it; much of it—such lines as the second group quoted—might have been a part of *Epipsychidion* or of other pieces where Shelley fully speaks with his own voice. But in the Epistle and in sections of *The Death of Sir John Franklin* Swinburne has passed to an utterance that he shares with no other man. On the face of it, then, the Epistle is markedly later than *The Temple of Janus* and belongs to the same period as the poem on the exploration of the North.

But we can be even more precise. One of the most vexing problems in Swinburnian studies is the dating, or even fixing the relative chronological order, of the earlier pieces, including those of the first *Poems and Ballads*. Fortunately, however, we are able to date almost exactly both *The Temple of Janus* and *The Death of Sir John Franklin*. The former was composed for the Newdigate prize of 1857, and had to be sent in by the 31st March; it is safe then to assign it in its definitive form to the first quarter of that year. We can get much closer than that—closer than the Spring of 1860, the date given by Lafourcade—to the time of composition of *The Death of Sir John Franklin* (which was also written for a prize—but not for the Newdigate, as is asserted by several ‘authorities’, and still less for the Newdigate of 1858, as is further asserted by these same masters of error). A letter from the poet to his mother clearly estab-

lishes that it was composed in the fortnight immediately preceding the 23rd February, 1860.

The Epistle, then, may with no little confidence be assigned to this latter year; it is certainly almost impossible that it should belong to 1857 (the year of the composition of *The Temple of Janus*), the date given by Lafourcade in his bibliographical table of the early works of the poet; and it is improbable that it belongs to 1858-59, the date erratically allotted to it by him in the first of his references to it.

Can anything be said as to the identity of the person to whom the poem is addressed? As we have already remarked, nothing at all supports Wise's assertion and Lafourcade's therefrom derived suggestion that Lady Trevelyan is the person concerned. But there are lines in a long poem (quite unpublished, save for the first twelve verses, and these have appeared only in Lafourcade's thesis) which give good reasons for believing that it is a woman whom the poet loved as a lover. (Lady Trevelyan was 44 in 1860, and Swinburne's attitude towards her is summed up in the phrase 'both my maternal relations', the one being his mother and the other this lady who encouraged his poetic aspirations and tried to keep them within the bounds of respectability.) In this poem, *By the Seaside*, which the two dullards who brought out the *Posthumous Poems* and the pretended *Complete Works* rejected, along with the Epistle and many other notable pieces, as unworthy of being printed, having no eye for its æsthetic qualities and its biographical interest, the poet addresses a woman who is about to pass out of his life:

And so to-night I have you, and to-morrow
Long miles will sweep between us . . .

* * *

Will you remember when the days are fair
In the far southern lands?

* * *

To-morrow! Well, you go then, it is said.
New faces there will smile,

And happy lives thro' sweet blind pleasures led
With many a chanted wile

Shall close round yours and you shall be as they—
You that have wander'd here . . .

RANDOLPH HUGHES

Are not 'the far southern lands' no other than the 'dear Italian distances' of which he speaks in the Epistle?

He had wandered with her lover-wise, and had taken with her liberties of playful caprice that no-one but a lover would use:

Will you remember how you used to rove
The lakeside lone and chilly,
Where one Spring night in your wet hair I wove
An uptorn water-lily?

(One cannot imagine him acting thus towards Lady Trevelyan for whom he had 'a filial heart', as he said in one of his letters to her.) But the affair had not gone well for him, she had shown indifference or disdain rather than a love at the height of his own:

... but my words grew cold
As my heart in your scorn.

* * *

I live and love you, as that mute lip says
In its rich-curved pride, . . .
No praise is mine, yet in these weak new days
Some might have loved and died.

* * *

... So sways between strange grief and stranger bliss
My spirit wild and weak. —
As the last sunlight dreaming in your eyes
Darkens, as moor and sea
Darken beneath a waste of windy skies,
So darkens life in me.

He expresses the same self-immolating masochistic devotion and the same bitter abandon of despair as in *The Triumph of Time*, the greatest of all poems on the glorious might-have-been of love and its defeat through the defection of the woman who might have been its queen:

What praise is written of those lovers dead?
They died—I love and live.
I lay my life before your onward tread—
My death were less to give.
When it shall please you, let me die—till then
I will not change nor shrink.
I will live out the life of other men . . .

(Is it the same woman as in *The Triumph of Time*? But this latter poem was written in 1863, and it is more than likely that *By the Sea-side* was written a little before the Epistle, which we have assigned to 1860. If the two women are the same then this date must be advanced accordingly, for it was not till the middle of 1862 that Swinburne met Jane Faulkner, the minx who called forth the sorrows of *The Triumph of Time*. I am in favour of retaining the earlier date for the two unpublished poems; chiefly because *The Triumph of Time* shows much ampler or more developed powers, and so appears to belong to a later period than this brace of companion poems; and also because as far as we know there was no question of Jane Faulkner leaving the poet to go on a long journey abroad; she merely declined from him upon a richer fellow of no account, a crucial circumstance that figures in *The Triumph of Time*, but has no place at all in the other two poems. (She got the fate she deserved, one may note in passing. Her married life was unhappy, and she took to strong drink.) These two poems, then, seem to point to an earlier, hitherto unnoticed, love affair in Swinburne's life, the unfortunate disillusioning upshot of which, confirmed by the episode with Jane Faulkner, probably diverted him from normal eroticism, and drove him into ~~indulgence~~ of the latent masochistic tendencies which were very strong in his nature. And perhaps certain pieces of the first *Poems and Ballads* are to be related to it. The close resemblance between certain parts of *The Triumph of Time* and certain lines of *By the Seaside* simply means that a mood recurred and that it received much the same expression. Lafourcade fails to notice these problems; for he fails to notice the almost certain connexion of *By the Sea-side* with the Epistle, and the similarity of parts of it to lines of *The Triumph of Time*. Indeed he gives it scanty and moronic attention: he is content to say that it probably reveals the direct influence of Preraphaelite paintings on Swinburne's work—which may be written down as bosh.)

To return to more particular consideration of *By the Sea-side*. On this, the night before she passes from him, they watch together the scene that has formed the setting for their loves:

RANDOLPH HUGHES

The slow salt ooze melts up thro' plashy sand
And crawls about your feet.
Come back, and by the window let us stand
Till sea and starlight meet.

It is the same twilight hour as in the Epistle, the same stretch
of sea, and the same weakness of wind:

It is near evening: wait a little yet,
See, the salt water-mark
High on the crumbling sand-slope is not wet,
Tho' it must soon be dark.
The great sea, calmed to its sunless heart,
Streaks the grey shining sand
With white sharp tongues of hungry foam that dart
Straight up the level strand.
... But softer on the trembling low-tuned sea
A rose-hued light grows shoreward,
As from the starless distance timidly
A shy soft wind creeps forward.
Here where we stand, along the rippling curtain,
It whispers half afraid
And heaves the sleepy folds and breathes uncertain
And mingles with the shade'...

The landscape and seascape are those in the vicinity of Capheaton in Northumberland, the ancestral home of the Swinburnes, which the poet frequently visited when he was a young man. (It is some fifteen miles to the north-east of Newcastle; hence the reference in the Epistle to the grim industrial ugliness that has broken up the conditions of happier life.) These scenes recur often in his work in verse and prose of the days of his early manhood. The following are a few parallels from prose passages to details in the Epistle:

'The grieved grey poplars shape' and 'the wind-bewildered trees'
Cf. 'three lean rowans and a bent poplar in front, seven aspens worried out of shape by a wind to the left' (from an unpublished fragment entitled *Kirkclowes*, the beginning of a novel that was later resumed in the unpublished *Lesbia Brandon* and also in *Love's Cross Currents*, which came out in the poet's life-time).

'the narrowed rim of hill'

Cf. 'Behind, there slanted upwards a small broken range of hill, the bare green windy lawns of them...' (*Love's Cross Currents*).

'Behind, a long slope of field . . . ; beyond that a slope upwards . . .'
(*Kirklowes*).

'no vague wind

Feels for the withered leaves . . .'

Cf. ' . . . the Spring began moving here and there, taking short breaths and feeling after doubtful flowers.' (*Lesbia Brandon*.)

'A broad white stream'

Cf. 'A mile lower the burn runs sharply . . .'
(*Kirklowes*).

'live snakes of evil white'

Cf. 'slow serpentine streaks of moving foam' (*Kirklowes*).¹

The Epistle then may with good reason be regarded as a sequel of *By the Sea-side*, in which is registered an unfortunate chapter in Swinburne's sentimental life that has never received attention. It was evidently written soon after the latter poem, while the woman was still on her way to Italy. The two poems are not only valuable intrinsically, but they afford material that must be taken note of in any definitive biography of the poet.²

Never was one like her in shape or soul—

So her dead lovers say.

Her name makes bright the worn and dust-grimed scroll

I pored on yesterday.

Of her on earth is nothing but their songs

And one lock of her hair;

—She sleeps with all her beauty, and the wrongs

She did while she was fair.

The tress they keep, sun-hued and soft as this

I touch . . .

The man, they say, whose chance eyes looked upon her,

Gave her his soul and died—

Ay, sinned and died for her, and called it honour,

And kept her name with pride.

So those men used to love in the far days!

Such might had woman then.

Nay, change not—it is spoken to your praise.

Where shall we find such men?

Is it that love is purer or more weak?

—And still nor guilt nor woe

Stains the white brow or shadows the clear cheek

Or soft limbs' rounded snow.

¹ Cf. also 'Sow the waste air with light as earth is sown with flowers', (*The Temple of Janus*) with the first line of the Epistle.

² Swinburnians will be glad to have the following verses of *By the Sea-side*, pending publication of the whole poem (and, it is hoped, of the entire body of Swinburne's unpublished writings):

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Still lives she in the heart of love, as when
Her silent angel's face
Shook with strange pain the changing souls of men
—Still keeps her foremost place.

These somewhat digressive lines evidently refer to Lucretia Borgia; the 'one lock of her hair' being the gold tress preserved in the Ambrosian Library at Milan; 'their songs,' the poems of Bembo and others of her admirers; and 'the dust-grimed scroll' some document Swinburne had been consulting in preparation for *The Chronicles of Tebaldeo Tebaldei*, an ambitious work on the Borgias which he never brought to completion. In a letter to Lady Trevelyan written from Mentone in January, 1861, he announces that he is making a beginning on this work:

I am trying to write prose . . . I want to make a few stories each about three or six pages long. Likewise a big one about my blessedest pet which her initials is Lucrezia Estense Borgia. Which soon I hope to see her hair as is kep at Milan 'in spirits in a bottle'.

This, taken together with the foregoing lines from *By the sea-side* bears out our assigning of this latter poem and the Epistle to 1860, and further suggests late 1860 as the most probable time of composition.

RANDOLPH HUGHES took *First Class Honours in Classics at New College*; did military service in both the last wars; was a regular contributor to the *Mercure de France*; wrote the centenary article on Swinburne in the *Nineteenth Century*, and in 1942 brought out his *Lucretia Borgia with a Commentary*, which was virtually a new study of his mind and art.

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IN the protected air of the monasteries until their dissolution in the fifteenth century a wide culture, catholic in the best sense of the word, was able to grow. Some scholars, we know, denied the value of classical learning, over-writing the lives of saints on parchments that were the rare manuscripts of Greek tragedy.

Yet it was in the monasteries that the first pulse of the renaissance, the beat in the temple of the natural man, was felt. The pagan rites of primitive tribes held a fascination for many medieval scholars because they bodied the aspirations of man in his struggle with nature, they were an intimate part of this struggle. It is not to be forgotten that the monasteries were the friend of the poor as well as pockets of learning during the whole of the dark ages. Many of the monks practised what is known as the black art; that is, they made researches into curious philosophies and sciences, were fascinated by the remnants of ancient rites among the people of the countryside, rites that kept alive the spirit of people during the black pogroms and oppression following the defeat of the peasant's revolt.

Many of the scholars from the monasteries no doubt were expelled from their havens for this dangerous curiosity, became the wandering scholars and hedge-priests of which the Great Anti-Christ, and earlier on the continent, the Archpoet, are forerunners. Wycliffe, a Langland, a Ball, seeking truth in the countryside among the serfs and landless people, in the stews of the towns; bringing the truth back to them again in visions, sermons, and translations of the Bible, are among them.

Out of the monasteries came that strange and lovely body of poetry of which 'Quia Amore Languet' is the finest example; poetry catholic in origin, human, even pagan in inspiration.

'Quia Amore Languet,' 'Veni Coronaberis' and the rest were some of the first modern poems; poems that deserve to take their place in the tradition of English poetry as forerunners or contemporaries of the round dance stanza forms that Chaucer, Spenser, Drayton, Crashawe, imported from the continent, crystallized and developed as indigenous poetic forms in our English renaissance.

Outside the monasteries in the countryside, in the villages, in the stews of the towns, the struggle was starker and more direct. The basis of all struggle in the fourteenth century was the dominating and all-embracing power and tenure of land, a domination that found its expression in poems like 'Erthe Appon Erthe' and 'The Lif of this Werld' and in the alliterative sermon-like visions of Langland. The sung ballads that seeped up from the south and took root in the north, on the border, and did not finally take literary shape until English was established as a new and remarkably potent, flexible vehicle for poetic expression, were another strand in the cloth of language and literature then developing.

The poetry of direct speech, springing from struggle, from direct contact with suffering people on the land, survived and overlapped the first flowering of the new poetry in the monasteries. The poems of Robert Crowley are the last voice of the middle ages, as the Quia Amore poems are the first voice of the renaissance. Robert Crowley expressed the last ditch struggle in the early sixteenth century of the peasants protesting against the enclosures of the land that led to the new age. It is significant that Crowley, the uncompromising protestant, preached and wrote against the taking over and destruction of the abbeys, which he says should be preserved as havens of learning.

In his first Epigram (opening with a common medieval formula of the man musing alone used by Baradoun in his 'Prentis Unto Wo') makes this clear:—

As I walked alone
and mused on thynges
That have in my time
been done by great kynges

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I bethought me of Abbayes
that sometime I sawe
Which are now suppressed
alle by a lawe.
O Lord (thought I then)
what occasion was here
To provide for learninge
And make povertye chere?

Robert Crowley (Crole, Croleus, Crolæus) was born in Gloucestershire, and in 1534 entered the University of Oxford. In 1542 he obtained his B.A. and became a probationer-fellow. In 1549 he commenced preaching in London.

Warton says of him: 'Possessed of those talents which qualified him for captivating the attention and moving the passions of the multitude, he held many dignities under Elizabeth in a church whose doctrines his undiscerning zeal had a tendency to destroy.' He was continually getting into trouble for his views on predestination (which we know little about) and his hatred of popery. While Vicar of St. Giles, Cripplegate, he was forbidden to preach within twenty miles of London for expelling from his church divers curates who went with their surplices to bury a dead body. He also quarrelled with his singing men about Porter's coats. He would not suffer the Wolf (i.e. the Surplice men) to come into his flock. For these opinions he prudently retired to Frankfurt while Mary was on the throne but later, as has been mentioned, he held many offices, including the Archdeaconry of Hereford.

It was while he was in London that most of the work by which we know him was written. Warton writes: 'His pulpit and his press, those two prolific sources of faction, happily co-operated in propagating the principle of predestination, and his shop and his sermons were alike frequented.' Crowley was a pioneer in wielding the power of the press.

He was in fact the first printer of Langland's *Vision Concerning Piers Plowman*, three imprints of which appeared during 1550 from his press in Ely Rents, Holborn. It will throw some light on Crowley's ideas on poetry to quote from his Introduction:—

'The Autore was named Roberte Langland, a Shropshire man born in Cleybirie, about viii myles from Malverne Hilles . . . in the reigne of Edward III in whose tyme it pleased God to open the eyes of manye to his truth, giving them boldness of hert to open their mouths and cry out agaynst the work of darkness, as did John Wicklefe.

'He wrote altogether in meter, but not after the maner of our rimers who write now-adays (his verses end not alike) but the nature of his meter is : to have 3 words at least in every verse which begin with the same letter. This thyng noted, the meter shall be very pleasant to read. The English is according to the tyme it was written in, and the sence somewhat darcke, but not so harde, but that it may be understande of such as will not sticke to break the shell of the nutte for the kernelles sake.'

Manuscripts of *Piers Plowman* had been current for nearly a hundred years, so that to Crowley Langland was an antique writer, using an archaic language, but because of the content, its currency among common people, and the fact that the same struggles that raged in Langland's day were still splitting the country, made it a valuable weapon in educating and organizing people. We do not know whether it was contact with Langland's manuscripts that sharpened Crowley's speech towards the rich, and deepened his sympathy with the poor, but it is certain that round about 1550 a profound change took place in his writing. The epigrams of 1549, and the *Voyce of the Last Trumpet* which followed are continually exhorting servants, beggars, and yeoman not to rise above their stations, while the most powerful passages of *Pleasure and Pain* and the pamphlets which follow, are invective against the get-rich-quick-landlords.

Crowley writes in a translucent English, easily understandable by any poor scholar who could pass his words to the illiterate commons, uncorrupted by the French words that were still current. He uses the rhyme and stanza forms Chaucer brought from the continent, the rime-royal, and alliteration lightly, not as a continuous drive. His light and sinuous verse is entirely his own. In his earlier poems there is an echo of the street songs of London, and the fierce sympathy of this Londoner for the struggles of the countryside is perhaps

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explicable by the large influx of landless peasants into the city.

The sources from which I draw are the five books reprinted by the Early English Text Society. The lack of a reader's ticket to the British Museum has forbidden me to draw on his other writings, which are voluminous. His epigrams, an alphabetical collection of thirty-three poems on features and abuses of his day, show the strongest influence of popular song. I will quote in full one on 'The Colyar of Croydon' which will awake an echo in our own time:—

It is sayd that in Croydon
there dyd sometyne dwell
A Colier that dyd
all other Coliers excell.
For his riches this Colier
myght have been a knight,
But in the order of knyghthode
he hadde no delyght. . . .
For when none but pore Colyars
dyd with coles mell,
At a reasonable price
they did theyr coles sell.
But since our knight Colyars
have had the firste sale,
We have paid much moneye
and had fewe sackes to tale.
A lode that of late yeres
for a royal was solde
Will cost now xvi.s.
of silver and golde.
God graunt these men grace
theyr pollyng to refrayne,
Or else bring them back
to theyr olde state agayne.
And especially the Colier
that at Croydon doth sell
For men thyncke he is cosen
to the Colyar of hell.

a poem that shows the changing relationships in England of the sixteenth century, when the coal merchant who had no

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delight in the order of knighthood because he would rather be rich. Each poem gives a picture of some aspect of life of the time. Of Alleyes:—

Two sortes of Allayes
in London I finde,
The one agaynst the lawe,
and the other agaynst kynde,
The firste is where bowlynge,
forbidden, men use,
And wastynge their goodis . . .

The other sorte of Allayes
that be agaynst kynde,
Do make my hart wepe
when they come to my minde.
For there are poor people
wellmost innumerable
That are driven to beg
and yet to work they are able . . .

after which he arraigns the Aldermen who take alley-rent.
Of Bawds:—

The bawdes of the stues
be all turned out;
But some think they inhabit
all England through out.
In taverns and tipplyng houses
many myght be founde,
If officers would serch
but as they are bounde.
Well, let them take heede,
I will say no more ;
But when God revengeth
he punisheth sore.
An horrible thyng
it is for to fall
Into the Lordis handis
that is eternall.

and on women:—

Her middle braced in
as smale as a wande,
And some by wastes of wyre
at thê post wyfes hande
A bumbë like a barrel
with whoopes at the skyrte,
Her shoes of suche stuffe
they may not touche dirte.

(shades of the crinoline!). Of inventors of strange news:—

In Plato hys common wealth
such men shoulde not dwell,
For poetes and oratoures
he did expell.
Oh that newes bryngars
had for theyr rewarde
New halters of hemppe
to set them forwarde.

the epigrams finish with an invective against 'Vaine Wryghters, Talkers, and Vaine Hearers' in somewhat the same strain.

Through his smug homilies you can feel humanity, even humour, compassion. His introductory 'The Boke to the Reader' gives a clue to his character:—

I bark at your fauts, but loth am I to byte,
If by this barking ought myght be won . . .

His next poem, the 'Voyce of the Last Trumpet', which he printed in 1549 consists of rather sententious advice to Beggars, Servants, Yeomen, a Lewd and Unlearned Priest, a Scholar, a Learned Man, a Physician, Lawyers, Merchants, Gentlement, Magistrates, and Women, both maidens and wives. His advice to the latter may raise a smile, or even nodding agreement or violent disapproval according to age and station:—

Avoyde idle and wanton talke,
Avoyde nyce lokes and daliaunce,
And when thou doest in the stretes walke
Se thou shew no lyght countenance . . .

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Let thyne hayre beare the same coloure
That nature gave it to endure,
Laye it not as doeth a whore
That woulde men's fantasies allure . . .

Paynte not thy face in any wise,
But make thy maners for to shyne,
And thou shalt please all such men's eyes
As do to godlines enclyne . . .

Nowe when thou arte become a wyfe
And hast a housbande to thy minde
See thou provoke him not to strife
Lest haply he do prove unkynde.

Acknowledge that he is the head
And hath of thee the governaunce . . .

Do thy busines quietly
and delyte not idel for to stande . . .

And in no case thou maist suffer
Thy servauntes or thy children to plaie,
For there is noght that may soner
Make them desire to renne awaye.

Se thou kepe them occupyed
From morne til it be nyghte agayne,
For if thou se they grow in pryde
Then laye hande on the bridel rayne . . .

It is in this poem that he advises Beggar, Servant, and Yeoman to keep their place, to beware of even the wish to rise, to be charitable and contented, and if the Landlord raises the rent, the Yeoman must pay up and pray for his oppressor. Such advice is in keeping with Christian thought of the time, and shows no inconsistency with his railing against the rich. This sturdy protestant railed against wrong wherever he saw it, whether it were committed by the king or by the poorest commoner.

Unlearned priests and physicians covetous of gain, ignorant, neglecting the poor for the rich, in particular are severely handled. His advice to scholars is charming:—

Be ever doing^f what thou can
Teachyng and^f learnyng some good thyng,
And then like a good Christian
Thou dost walke forth in thy callynge . . .

and as regards the scholar's propensity for sport:—

To shote, to bowle, or caste the batte,
To playe tenise, or tosse the ball,
Or to rene base, like men of war
Shall hurt thy studie not at al.
For all these things to recreate
The minde, if thou canst hold the mean,
But if thou be affectionate
Then thou dost lose thy studye cleane.

which might be the advice of any father to a son at the University.

It was between this poem and the next that Crowley's vision of the world around him sharpened, and made him change considerably his views on the humility of yeoman to lord. 'Pleasure and Payne' he printed in 1551. In 1550 he had brought out three editions of *Piers Plowman*, and the country was seething with revolt. His giant congregations at Pauls Cross must have been full of landless peasants who had drifted into the town.

The poem starts as the voice of Christ speaking the parable of the just and the unjust man. His verse has become mature and full and steady, and it very soon becomes apparent that the just man is the yeoman, and the unjust man the landlord:—

To the just man he says:—

"So when I was naked and bare
Havyng no clothes my flesh to hyde
From your owne backs then dyd you spare

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And gave me clothes for back and syde,
So that I might the cold abyde,
But if you lacked sufficient
Then did you my great lacke lament.

and the yeomen of those times very often did lack sufficient.

But to the wicked Christ shall saye
"Avoyde from me, ye wycked sorte,
For in my need you said me naye
With spitefull-wordis of discomforte.
Yet my preachers dyd you exhorte
Me in my membres to refreshe
Knoweynge that all were but one fleshe."

Do we catch an echo of 'Quia Amore Languo' in this stanza?

"Oh" shall Chryste say to them agayne,
"Ye deafe dorepostis, could ye not heare?
Thynke you the head hydeth no payne
When the membres have heavye chere?
In you nought but flesh does appere
For if my spirit in you had ben
Me in myne must nedes have sene.

"The pore, the pore and indigent
Come unto you ofte tymes ye knowe,
And you sawe them wepe and lament
Yet ye would not on them bestowe
The least fruit that you did growe.
No. No. yet were ready to take.
That other gave them for my sake."

Then comes the well-known passage in which he makes quite clear his views:—

"Your hertis were harder than the flynt,
In them no pitye coulde be founde,
Your gredye gutte could never stynt
Till all the good and fruitfull grounde
Were hedged in wythine your mounde,
You wicked sorte, how used ye
The landis and goodis you had of me? . . .

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"And when you had once gotten in
Into my folde, among my shepe
There you thought to be no synne
Still in your kennells forto slepe,
Setting such ones my flocke to kepe
As were more like to eate the lambe
Than to defend his feeble dame."

Referring particularly to the newly released parsons and priests who were busily enriching themselves. Then, turning again to the landlord:—

"Ye robde, you spoylde, ye bought, ye solde
My flock and me, in every place
Ye made my bloude vilar than golde
And yet you thought it no traspasse.
Oh wicket sorte, voyde of all grace,
Avoyd from me downe into hell
Wyth Lucifer; there shall ye dwell.

"Unto the hungry parte thy breade,
And when thou shalt the naked se
Put clothes on him; thus myghte read
In my prophetis that preched me.
How can that man have charitie
That beyinge riche sheweth no pitye?

"What though the pore did lye and dye
For lacke of harbour, in that place
Where you had gotten wyckedly
By lease, or else by playne purchase,
All housing that should, in the case
Have been the safeguard and defence
Agaynst the stormy violence?

"Yes, what if the poor famyshed
For lack of foode upon that ground,
The rentes whereof ye have reysed
Or hedged it within your mownde . . ."

We can delight, in passing, in Crowley's handling of the stanza. It is the rime royal of King James and Chaucer, but seldom has the couplet in the centre been handled so masterfully.

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This is didactic poetry, passionate, in the tradition of English radicalism, but unique in English poetry, crystallizing a conviction that had been growing in Crowley since he had set up in London as a printer. I should like for a moment to hark back to his epigram on 'Usurers' to show that this was no sudden conversion, but a courageous coming to maturity out of the tradition of feudal thought:—

Then said the usurer
 "This matter goeth well,
For my twenty pounce lande
 that I chaunced to sell,
I shall have foure hundred
 pounce rente by the yere
To lyve lyke a Lorde
 and make jolye chere?

. . . heaven is no place
 for such unlawful gayne . . . "

"Why sir, it is my living!"

"But not your calling."

"You are called to live
 at twentie pound by yere . . .
Till God did encrease you
 by his merciful wayes
By encreasinge your corne
 and your cattell in the leyes . . .

"Ye are not born to yourselfe . . . "

It is necessary to understand that this is no revolutionary thought for the middle ages. The feudal church was always opposed to usury. But this doctrine develops logically as a weapon against the enclosures, a weapon in the hand of the man without property. The new age, when usury was acceptable, even by the Protestant church, ever a drive forward to new wealth, richer and more complex forms of society. It is for this reason that I say that Crowley was the last ditch-fighter for feudalism; the lords he arraigns are not the old patriarchal

feudal lords, but the new moneyed class, even though his words take on a new meaning four hundred years later, when the age, new and oppressive in his day, remains oppressive for the many, but is now old and dying, full of destruction, while a new age again is germinating, involving a new relationship of man with the earth.

After 'Pleasure and Payne' poetic form became inadequate for his polemic, and his later printed works were prose pamphlets, written in a style that augurs that of Lilburne and Winstanley, Milton and Cobbett, a prose muscular and remarkable even for Elizabethan days.

'The Waie to Wealth' opens with a preamble ending with a justification of the pamphleteer in what he now recognizes as a battle:—

"I shall be no less worthy the name of a true-hearted Englishman than the trumpeter is worthy the name of a man-of-war, though he do not indeed fight, but animate and encourage other."

He then inquires into the causes of sedition:—

"If I should demand of the poor man of the country what thing he thinketh to be the cause of sedition, I know his answer, he would tell of the great farmers, the graziers, the rich butchers, the men of law, the merchants, the knights, the lords, and I cannot tell who; men who have no name because they are doers in all things that any gain hangeth on. Men without conscience. Men utterly devoid of God's fear. Yea, men who live as though there were no God at all. Men that would have all in their own hands; men that would leave nothing for others; men that would be alone on the earth; men that be never satisfied. Cormorants, greedy gulls; yea men that would eat up men, women and children, are the causes of Sedition . . .

"If I should demand of the greedy cormorants what should be the causes of sedition they would say: The peasant knaves be too wealthy, provender pricketh them. They know not themselves, they know no obedience, they regard no laws, they would have all men like themselves, they would have all things common. They will not have masters of that which is our own. They will appoint us what rent we shall take for our grounds. We must not make the best of our own . . . These are jolly fellows. They will cast down our parks and lay our pastures open. They will have the laws in their own hands. They will play the king . . ."

remarks very reminiscent of certain employers in our own day.

Yes, Crowley was a partisan, even though his final words to the poor were to refer their cause to God for redress. He followed 'The Waie to Wealth' with 'An Information and Petition agaynste the oppression of the pore commons of this Realme'. Again and again during his life the peasants rose against these evils, and even though he deeply deplored their taking the sword into their own hands, his words must have been the trumpet he intended. But those he arraigned, the cormorants and greedy gulls, restless, greedy, developing new ways to wealth, conquered at last; ironically it was they who carried humanity forward into the age of Spenser, of Marlowe, and Shakespeare.

ROBBERS' REQUIEM

by FRED MARNAU

All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers.—John, x. 8.

Amore amaro

Death, the midday stands here with barbarian fists,
with a tight mouth, like a hawk among trees, hot
like a lizard and fountain-cold, dazzling
and stiff. Then evening slowly scares him off. Thus
I wait also, Angelus, angel's call, my head tensed
to the earth, ear to the ground, eye above eye
shooting high like the ghost in a tower. And thus
also the hours foregather, the clock-hands move
in the grass, my pair of wings bursts open which
has darted me above my body's blinding, defiant fame.
For, that the soul should be divisible, open to plunder,
and die, has distressed, confused me in the whirlpool.
Now my throat without me often roars, the peacock stalks
across me, the dragons look indulgent at my hand,
my heart burns down. Henceforth there shall be
nothing to undo me, not in wrath nor benediction,
now and when I go to journey out. Bitter love,
perhaps the sorrow was not all that great, O death.

Kyrie

Servantmen are we. Drones,
droning, rock us, air
and sleep. Robbers are we
on robbing warrant for our Lord,
Lord Jesus Christ.
Horizontally are set our lips,
straight our spirit, flame-like,
and round about our heads
is war: the swallow and
the bat
on robbing warrant for our Lord,
Lord Jesus Christ.

This wakens us at midday:
 the righteous find their joy in death.
 From us, sleepridden, grim,
 who have cursed the cold and evaded
 the heat, who never renounced any
 pomp: rob the soul from our
 bodies: to this rude
 speech listen, Lord,
 to this vassals' call, to our robbers'
 Requiem.

Chorus

What are they hiding in us, the sleeping waters?
 Red-glowing glass and thin gold and high altars.
 What moves through us roaring, what teeth sliced
 our flesh? Dolphins, phantoms, devils; and Christ
 throws nets between land and land, into the chase
 where the fires purge us and extinguish our face.
 Water and fire cause dream-ghosts and swamp,
 the air blows through, the earth undoes the cramp.
 What lands, when we are burned, at last remain?
 Heaven and hell, a single land, the truth's domain.

But why is this your haul, why Man? Who does so
 straighten us chivalrous towards tragedy, to grow
 proudly away from bestial noise? Who dries us
 finally, makes us invincible? Death's robber-house
 concocts such alchemy. We know well where the devil drives,
 and more than of the jingling coffers and fluttering knives
 of the body-healers, and of the soul's sounding horn.
 And your angels we know but angry and torn,
 when they haunt and behold us, and battle and shout:
 and are we to be still your last guards in the rout?

Rex gloria

O our glory, look upon this pit where we
 waste song together with monkeys and martens,
 where we sit on stones, licked and scratched
 by dogs and by suckling cats of every kind.

ROBBERS' REQUIEM

Where men, hanging and hanged and suffocated
by poisonous air and bleached out, consider
the ways of the world, while ogling and
long-fingered gentlefolk steal the shoes
from their feet and slam bolts into their faces.
In mercy forget us: blessed by so much
justice we wander away, since you in mercy
forgot us in this colony of miserere calls.
The golden spangles now are taken from us,
the sea calls Venice back by day and night,
the light of summer and of the summer-night has,
with wings and worms, gone long ago back to the earth.
Assisi shouts abandoned, Fiesole is still,
O lord of glory, faded and still is
midsummer's benighted heart and all of glory's rest.

Ego ipse angelus

I, mine own stranger, an angel;
I am made of thorns, jointed as the rose;
I am I, whom you are guarding, whom you call.

And out of myself I look in wonder,
I walk about and sit down with men,
and have no share and do not touch,
shut within myself, your glass,
but I am warmed and strangely gladdened.

And this body of thorns, stranded
among the bones of the black mechanic,
sunken in moonless midday, wakeful,
celebrated by the glory of half-angels,
boyishly attired, virginal.

And it is a poor and evil thing
that ruins and holds us shut,
hangs shields about us and extorts us,
withers our thorns, mouth, heart, hand,
freezes the water, petrifies the earth.

FRED MARNAU

O that which leads us away and makes us live
and shinningly attires for lasting rest
with fragrant wool—O you eternal lamb!

Libera me

The passion of this time for speed has but one aim:
the transitory, the magnet-mountains of the end.
Thus the images fall down before our waking eyes
in their deceptive stillness: and also thus
will the masks die: silenced shall be the stress
of the muses' rivalry and of the aeroplanes' requiem.
What lives above, in the high wind, will hide its face
since restless we shall waken to suffer long the blaze.

There where my life meets with earthly chronicle,
Pressburgian peace and war-gate of midday,
there was my sorrow ordained, the sister of heaven,
land was given unto me and taken away the horses' pride.
There I was forbidden the Danube's rounding harvest,
the wanderer the amber-way, the calling stone-wall.
Therefore while you have befriended with death my eyes,
I halt and yet speed, my measure's length, rapacious for peace.

(Translated by Ernst Sigler and F.M.)

A LOVE STORY

ALAN WYKES

IN the town there lived a child, Rufus Barnard, who was a little slow-headed. He played the harmonica. He had red hair and pale eyes with lashes like a worn toothbrush; and the rest of him wasn't much to look at either; he'd just grown up with people liking him, calling him Ruff.

His business was running errands for people who gave him pennies. It was tricky, remembering which person wanted which errand and which corner of his handkerchief he'd knotted whose money in. The harmonica was a trademark; he played it all the time, and when Cap Ingate or Miss Pennycoat or the old Webb couple heard him they would say:

'That's Ruff. Give him the list and the money.'

And when he'd got that and made sure it was best end of neck Miss Pennycoat wanted and to bring nothing but Union Jack Paste for Cap Ingate's callouses, he began to retail the news, whatever it was that somebody else had told him to pass on.

'Mrs. Conway said to tell you her husband's got a white collar job now at the Town Hall four times the money, thank you,' standing quite still with that gaze of searching wonder that seemed to mark him as being tuppence-in-the-shilling off; but it was not that: he liked looking at people.

Most of all he liked looking at the people in the Garrett Home; and at Mr. and Mrs. Webb.

The Webbs were very old. Donkey's years, Ruff thought between sucks and blows on the harmonica. His affection always wanted to do something for them, to make them happy, to take away their loneliness. It was this love that tragedy befell.

From the Garrett Home to the Webbs' was two roads and a long nettle-grown path to where the high house stood alone; and from the Webbs' to where everybody else lived was two roads and a crescent; and it was daily wonder all the way.

He began at the Garrett Home because it was the time they were all turned into the yard to air, and also the hour when Swing the school-board man was down in the town for an elevenses. Not that Swing worried Ruff much, having it written down in his penny notebook that Ruff was a few buttons missing; but play safe.

So there every morning at eleven was Ruff spread against the railings under the brassoed letters that were brightened every day, though no-one saw the brightening and none but Ruff knew they were cleaned so early in the morning there was no sun to glitter on the splendid legend: GARRETT HOME FOR THE AGED DESTITUTE. Miss Wherry in a good mood told him that.

'We're up early here,' she said. She had a stiff nurse's apron like shiny paper and a frilled cap like a blancmange mould tied under her chin.

'Why?' Ruff asked and vamped a chord in G. 'And why are they always out there in the yard?'

'They're old,' she said. 'Got to put them out to air or they'd smell.'

So he turned up every morning thinking they'd like a bit of music, free. There was nothing else he could give them. He didn't know if they liked his playing. They just sat on the wooden seats. Between the old men and the old women there was a high wall trimmed with broken bottle-ends. Behind, across the wall like the top of a T, lay the Home. It was built of saffron bricks and had rows of windows without curtains. It must be a wonderful place, he thought, and asked Miss Wherry why the old men and women were separate.

'No good them being together at their time of life,' she said. 'Married or not they're past anything but mischief making when they get together.' He didn't understand but thought it must be right because Miss Wherry said so, with her face hard as brass as she spoke.

He thought they were wonderful. He was always telling people about them, but only Mr. and Mrs. Webb didn't smile.

'They're even older than you,' he told them.

The Webbs were wonderful in a different way, like the

difference between liking and loving. He thought of them with tenderness because they were alone and lonely, even their home wasn't near anywhere, and it was filled with pictures of children and grandchildren who had gone away.

'Why don't you go to the Home?' he said. 'There's a tidy few more there, men and women all separate so as not to get on each other's nerves.' But Mr. Webb only shook his head worriedly and said not to repeat such a thing anywhere. Then Ruff went down to the butcher's for a bone for stewing and please would the fourpence do on pension-day? and forgot Mr. and Mrs. Webb because on the way the slide of his harmonica stuck.

But he could not forget for long. Day upon day mounted and he blew his music outside the Home, outside the Webbs' crooked house, outside the homes of his paying customers. And there was a thing he couldn't understand: the way there seemed to be less and less in the Webbs' house each day; until in the end there was nothing but a few sticks of furniture in one room and the photographs of the children and grandchildren who had gone away.

'You selling up?' he asked, twisting one leg round the other as he stood at the door; and nobody took him for rude, least of all old Mr. Webb, who just muttered:

'We don't need the stuff. It's . . . in the way.' But Ruff knew that wasn't cross-his-heart. He knew, even though he was slow. He told Miss Pennycoat who snuffed up her thin red nose and said:

'It's a shame, poor old things, too proud to ask and not a soul to look after. . . . Ruff, pop to Mrs. Conway's and ask if her husband would be good enough to spare me a minute one evening.'

So under his nose there was something happening. He was glad because he liked Mr. and Mrs. Webb differently from anyone else and wanted something good to befall them, like going to the Home, where they could sit on seats in the yard in the sun and have nothing to do all day but get looked after.

He did not know this: that every day when he called he forged a link, that he brought to them the outside world from which they shrank in horror. When he spoke of the Home they

remembered the world, which could not want them at their age. It was enough that they had each other. This was what they wanted more desperately than anything in the world, even though they were like a clod of earth washed away from the mainland. Every night they looked carefully into the pictures that covered the walls and saw their children who had departed in marriage and happiness and to whom they would not be beholding. They slept knowing the future could be only tomorrow, and perhaps tomorrow.

But there was this happening that he could watch grow like a coming Christmas and be glad in his slow mind that he could do something for them.

It was the word, his word, that started it. Until he spoke, no-one had thought of Mr. and Mrs. Webb, alone. Now everyone began to think of them at once. He heard them every day. The sound of the harmonica outside *Atlantic Cottage* brought Cap Ingate to the door puffing like the whales he used to hunt.

'It's a shame, Ruff boy, bust me if it ain't. But we'll have 'em out of it quick.'

He asked Miss Pennycoat how quick and she blessed the boy and told him he'd no idea how long these official things took but it'd surely be all right when Mr. Conway in the Town Hall got to work with the paper signing.

It was going on for the hot part of summer. When he stood outside the Home railings giving them a selection he could feel the sun touching his back like warmed wool; and its yellow light lay within the railed yard. Along the dividing wall all the bottle-ends turned to flashing crystals; and on each side of the wall the old men and women sat in the sunlight, very still, not even talking, because they were so happy. He thought there was no sign of happiness like silence; it did not occur to him that there might be nothing for them to say.

They sat in strange positions too: bent double with their heads on their knees or stiffly back against the slatted backs of the seats. When he called out to Miss Wherry she shrugged and twirled off calling back that she hadn't the time to see or care what way they sat. So it must be the best way for folks that age to sit, and he was pretty certain it'd be best for Mr. and

Mrs. Webb when they could get away from that dark house with the dwindling furniture and stay here in the sun all day.

He took the picture in his mind down the two sunny roads to the high dark house that you'd never guess was empty save for the front parlour, because all the curtains were still up, and told them:

'Gosh, it's fine down the Home—sun in the garden like warm lemonade, and all settin' there both sides the wall they are, happy as kings, all peace and quiet.' He didn't say any more because it had to be a surprise; but Mrs. Webb put out her hand in its black sleeve and touched him and said:

'You told nobody, did you Ruff? About us? We're separate here, 'way from things a bit. . . you told nobody about the way we sold the furniture, did you? . . . we didn't want it, time's past when we want much 'cept being in the same place.' When he looked past her he could see the empty spaces of the house, shadows like dark trees. He looked past her and said, 'No, by gosh,' because of the surprise, he mustn't let on. And he saw the pride too: that they wouldn't care to be beholding to anyone for getting them into the Home. He tootled a tune and ran away because there was nothing they wanted that day.

But there came a prouder day than any. It was when Miss Pennycoat gave him a chocolate cake as well as two pennies for running her errands, and said:

'You've done a good deed, Ruff—reminding us of our responsibilities as neighbours. But for you I daresay the old couple would have been left to themselves to the end.' So he smiled as he thanked her with his mouth full of cake and harmonica and ran off to Cap Ingate to tell him of the good deed.

'That's right, Ruff boy,' the Cap said. 'I was going to tell you so meself. Living down there near nobody, like a Pacific island the place is; no wonder we forgot 'em. But Conway's hoisted everybody up—Watch Committee an' all. We got papers signed, recommendations, everything. Hope somebody does the same for me someday.'

'You mean they're going?' the boy said. 'To the Home?'

'That's it, boy.'

'Can I tell them?' he asked. It was wonderful. 'Can I tell them myself?'

'No harm,' the Cap said. 'But they'll know by the time you land there. The Governors' representatives are calling this day. Final signings, I reckon.'

He ran all the way, along the roads where people knew him and waved, under the sun that was hot in its midday height, to the house that stood separate, entirely alone, where lived the two for whom he felt great happiness now.

He could see them through the window even before he got to the door. They were in the room, together, spellbound. They were seated on two chairs, perfectly still, not looking at each other or at anything. They might still have been listening to the news, not even fully believing yet, perhaps not understanding that happiness had come to them at last. Ruff could understand that: to know of something you believed not possible, beyond wildest dreams, and then to hear. . . . Yes, he thought, I wish I could've told them myself; and paused before knocking.

For a long time there was no answer. It was very quiet. He stood in the midst of a world of hot silence. In a minute he took the harmonica from his pocket and began to play, to tell them he was there. The tune sounded thin in the summer day, like an echo of forgotten voices. Then at last there were slow footsteps and the door opening and Mr. Webb standing there with unbelief still in his eyes, saying, 'Come in, Ruff; come in.'

Before this moment he had never been in the house. It was strange: there was dust like a glaze on everything, and trembling in the sunlit corners of the dim room there were bits of gray fluff like dandelion clocks. There was a smell too, and he remembered Miss Wherry, how she said old people had to be put out to air. Looking up he could see black wheels of dust gathered in the corners. He said: 'It ponks in here; I bet you'll be glad to get down the Home,' but they did not seem to hear him. Mrs. Webb was sitting in the same chair; she had not moved, not even turned toward him. He could see one half of the empty face, the closed eye, a little something like a spider walking in her hair. Neither of them had ever seemed so old; but perhaps it was because they were in the room. He had thought of them sprightly, prettily old. Now he saw they were

like dried leaves, bloodless, not beautiful at all. But he saw how it was: they just couldn't believe it. 'It's right,' he said. He rubbed the shiny nickel harmonica up and down his front. 'It was my good deed. You're going. Can't you believe it's true?'

Mr. Webb shook his head. Words had shrunk to silence within him. 'No,' he said presently. 'After you said you hadn't told. . . .'

'That was to put you off,' Ruff said; 'to make the surprise.' But the old man was going on, whispering to himself. His brittle hands plucked at the folds of his clothes.

' . . . thinking we were safe all the time . . . you to get us our errands, no-one else knowing. . . . no-one knew,' he kept saying. He could not understand, he had forgotten again how they came to know. And to the child's surprise tears began to come from the old man's eyes. But then he remembered people cried with happiness. He put the harmonica to his lips. 'I'll give you some music,' he said. You had to do this with old people: let them think you understood them, knew what it was all about. 'If the men from the Home come back they might think you don't want to go,' he said, and began to play. The old man kept saying, 'But we have to go, we have to go,' though he was unheard behind the music. 'On Monday we have to go.'

On Monday Ruff went to the Home. It was a day when all should have been good; but there was something bad in it: he had remembered that he would not be able to speak to the Webbs again. No-one was allowed to speak to anyone in the Home; they wanted peace and quiet.

'Miss Wherry,' he called, but she was busy threading her way among the silent seated men. On the other side of the wall other nurses were walking too, all with a purpose, fetching and carrying things, hurrying between doors, much too busy to speak, even to notice him. Which was in a way good; because when he slipped in at the open gate there was no-one to shoo him off. And he must see what it was like inside . . . he must see, must see. . . .

It was a momentary vision. At the huge folded-open doors where the wall joined the building he peered in, breathless. All the time he was rubbing the harmonica up and down his jersey.

It was a wonderful place—even in a fleeting moment he could see that. High as a church inside, and dark and cool (though the windows were all tightly closed), with little squares of sunlight like dice lying on the long bare table and the wooden forms. He was thinking how wonderful it would be for them when Miss Wherry saw and whirled toward him.

‘Ruff! What are you doing here? *inside* the gates—’

‘Just having a see,’ he said. ‘I only wanted to know—’ He looked up at her. ‘Do you know Mr. and Mrs. Webb’s coming here to-day?’ he asked.

‘I do that. A pest it is too. As if I haven’t enough without two new inmates—’ she flurried away.

He thought suddenly: If I go quickly I may see them before they start. He began to run along the sunny roads, hurrying to get there, to speak to them for the last time. Shut away in the Home, he thought, I’ll only be able to wave, and they’ll be separate, one each side of the wall.

He ran on. There was suddenly something within him that made him speed: it was not knowledge of the time of their departure, nor was it only desire to be there, to see them, to speak a goodbye. It was something else, something stronger than he knew or could have named.

Leaving the sunpolished roads he came to the track that led off to the high dark house standing alone. He was running fast. All round him the world was very bright with the sun.

From a long way off he could see that the house was no longer alone, no longer desolate, no longer a retreat. Outside stood a dark van, with dark windows and gleaming wheels, and there were people moving from the van to the house, carrying things. He came nearer and saw that some were strange people and some whom he knew. The ones he knew were standing still, very still, all facing one way, toward the house, while the others passed to and fro between them, dressed in white coats and ordinary coats and suits with policemen’s silver buttons. For a moment he thought how fine it was that all these people had come to see Mr. and Mrs. Webb off; but at the same time of thinking he knew it was not a true thought.

He was there now and pressing through the little knots of people. He felt hands come out and grab him and heard voices

call him to stop; but he went on, on through the open front door into the hall. And there he stopped, quite still, his legs still contriving to appear in the motion of running.

In the moment of stillness he saw everything. The house had been thrown wide open—every window, every door. There were no dark spaces left in the house; it was flooded with light, with air. There seemed to be people everywhere—policemen stabbing dusty shadowed corners with blades of light from torches, men writing in notebooks, a man with a camera set on a tripod gazing at something that for a moment Ruff could not see, voices, scraps of words and phrases: ‘... place is filthy ...’ ‘... must’a bin like this for years ...’ ‘... poor old souls, alone like this ...’ ‘... no wonder ... sooner be dead than parted, I suppose ...’ All this came to him like sunlight flowing through a leafed tree. For the moment it meant nothing. Then suddenly there were two things that meant everything in the world.

The first was that beyond the cameraman, between legs and shoulders of men who had not yet seen him and seemed merely to be pointing, talking, he saw in the corner of the parlour where the long tube of piping and the gas-ring lay like a long flatheaded snake, the two prostrate bodies (he could not see the faces) of Mr. and Mrs. Webb. They embraced each other with terrible fixity. The other thing he noticed—began to be aware of, for already some of the men had seen and collared him and were thrusting him outside—was the heavy smell of gas.

He began to walk home, away from the house where the whispering onlookers were still waiting for something to happen, for the bodies to be brought out at least, to see *something* after standing there all this time.

Birds sang in the trees and he felt the warmth and caress of summer. Before he was halfway home he sat down and wept for the terrible thing he had seen, and known, and caused.

ALAN WYKES was born in 1913. He left school at fourteen and from 1940-46 served in the Royal Armoured Corps. He has had thirty-five stories accepted by various periodicals since his release from the Army, and two novels by him are shortly to be published by Messrs. Duckworth.

OLD MAN AND TWO CHILDREN

NORMAN GEAR

I PUT it to you—here was the old man living in the old house, or rather reputed to be living there, for no one ever saw him go in or come out. But someone lived there, there were lights in the windows at evening, a queer cracked fidgety voice singing in an upper room, milk and bread and some fruit were delivered, put down at the door and the money held to them, the vendors, through the letter box. That is the evidence. And the old man was seen in the vicinity on several occasions by different people. He could not be associated with the house but there was nowhere else he could live in the neighbourhood. All the other homes were accounted for, everyone knew everyone else. But the old man, seen flitting under a street light or in the sunlight on the edge of the park, turning away if anyone approached him, hiding a wrinkled, scarred sick face behind a newspaper picked out of the gutter. . . . That is how he got his news, pickings out of the gutter, scavaging for the news, holding a torn, faded headline close before his weak wild eyes, muttering into his bit of a beard, agitated about a week-old disaster, a month-dead love affair, living just a step behind all the time . . . where else could such a sick, weak, dirty old man live but in the house, the ghost house of the local kids, the eyesore, the house that ought to be pulled down? So we will accept that the old man lived there, alone. There was only enough food taken to that weather-worn and warped door to keep one old man alive. Not enough left over for a cat even. Crumbs, perhaps, for a bird. We don't know. . . . And the garden overgrown with weed, luxurious with rank, stinking coarse greenery, a vague, tangled excess of elementary growth. And green all the year round, one constant shade of dead dark green. Not one flower anywhere in the summer. Stalk and leaf embracing in a furious strangling passion, the whole garden,

seen through the locked gate, a writhing, killing intimacy of green things.

No one could think how he got in and out. Not through the front door. Women up and down the street would swear that the door never opened, not even to take in the food and milk. That, it was said, was hooked with a stick from the side window at night, it was always in the wicker basket with a large handle. The old man, so it was said, opened the window and thrust out a long stick and fished in the darkness for the handle of the basket and then hauled it in.

Of course there was the gate in the garden, but from examinations made from the outside several men would stake their lives that it had not been opened for ten years or more. It was rusted tight, rust dripped from the lock. No, it could not be that way that he got out and in. And not over the wall either, since that crowned with spikes and broken glass, defeated the best efforts of the local boys to climb it. So there you have it, the house and the old man, connected because you could not connect one to anyone or anything but the other. Someone lived in the house . . . the old man must live somewhere . . . therefore the old man lived in the house.

But no one had ever *seen*, no one was quite sure. It was useless to try to follow the old man because though you kept on his heels for hours you didn't seem to go anywhere, you remained in the vicinity of the park or the street lamp where you got on his trail, you got tired as if you had walked miles and were on the other side of town. So you gave up, you turned away and immediately he was gone. You were left more or less where you started and had accomplished nothing.

So it was left at that eventually.

But the two children, the boy and the girl, brother and sister. The image of the old man, assembled in their active minds from scraps and shadows picked out of the conversation of adults, mysterious rich fragments so different from the prosaic things adults usually said, was formed and confirmed, polished and elevated in the dusks of their bedroom, in the intimate corners of their playroom. The Old Man. They wrote him down in capital letters, they drew effigies of him on slates that were rubbed clean frantically if anyone was heard

approaching. Then he was chalked in again, the sister drawing his squat magic body and the brother his round, lyrical eyed and hairless head and underneath in tilted capitals THE OLD MAN. They developed him over the evenings of summer and autumn, added a variation to a feature, lengthened his nose, widened his eyes, elongated his already enormous ears, gave him smaller hands, little babyish fingers that hooked like fish hooks in the air each side of his crooked thighs. They made him up, secretly, month by month. He was their old man. And then his house. At first a square divided into windows and doorway and surrounded by a circle of scribbles, the garden. That was scrubbed out and they drew the house in plan view. They hovered in the air above it and took off its roof, drew in the rooms, passages . . . but that only sufficed for the upper floor. They decided in whispers that the only thing they could do about the lower floor was to draw it from underneath, they would lie flat underneath it, like mice, and remove its floors. This they did, they drew the rooms and passages from the earth beneath them. They drew the light bulbs hanging from the ceilings and the underneath of tables and chairs.

So they had their two views of the house and their image of the old man and this contented them for a time. Then one night, whispering from bed to bed in their room, they decided that the images were not enough. They had to see, to see the old man in the old house. An audacity of the imagination flowed into them, the idea of entering the old house and speaking to the old man once it had entered them brought them a hard maturity, a bright purpose. They planned to do it soon.

So far it is clear, is it not? The old man, the house, the children and the attraction of oddity, the mysterious, drawing them together. The magnetism of the imagination, centred in the house, perhaps in the old man himself who (I suppose it) desired to attract those two vivid, innocent minds. Did he know? Did he know what shape his body had on their chalking slates, did he know they had drawn his house one way without a roof or ceilings, the other way without a floor? Did he feel an insecurity from their eyes of imagination? Or a need of them? Let us imagine his loneliness as

impervious to anything but shy, queer inquisitive children who would accept him into their world as a grotesque drawing in chalk, a goblin who lived in a bubble of loneliness drawn on a slate. And he needed them so that they got in his house, no one knows how. If you ask the children now how they got in they will look at you in surprise as if you had suddenly shown yourself to be impossibly dense and then they will become inarticulate and shy and you will get nothing out of them. But they got in. Did he let them in, know they were coming? I don't know. He will never tell us now. When at last we were able to get our hands on him it did us no good. We didn't believe the children when they broke into our silly little party and told us he was dead in the house. How could they know. We didn't know they had been in there, we didn't know it was they who killed him. But later, when for four days the food and milk was uncollected on the doorstep, the police were informed and at last that massive, stubborn front door was broken down and a stream of people went through the house and there he was, caught at last, dead, with his beard growing thicker than in life.

What happened in that house when the children got in? What they told us was incoherent, broken in sequence, even contradictory. They always began their story by telling of the idea to go in and then they were in. Not once a clear word about how. Only that they wanted to get in and see the old man and that they did. And then a rambling tale of a stairway, a passage, a door into the garden, and the old man with them and afraid of something. No, they will never tell us. As they grow up they will forget. So we must conjecture. What, given the circumstances, must have happened? All three were of simple direct natures, each would have done what was natural to do, no prevarication. Given the character of the children, the figure of the old man, surely we can deduce enough?

Well then, they were in, in the strange dark house. It was dusk. They had slipped away unnoticed from their own garden and ran quietly through the streets to the house . . . and found themselves inside it, and there on the stairs half-way up or half-way down, with a candle held under his sparse beard, stood the old man, expecting them, loving them, afraid of

them. How bright they must have seemed to his weak eyes, how vivid and terrible their eyes, how strange and sinister their presence. But really it is the children I must consider; their arrogant creativeness desired him, he had to be theirs, he was their old man and this was his, and therefore also their, house. Within it, now that they were within it, they were free, there was nothing to discipline their imagination, nothing to prevent it, the house was all empty and all promise and the old man the slave, the twisted bit of flesh that one could take in the fingers and sculpt and play with. Can you imagine the carefree leap up the stairs, the eager, merciless clustering round his old body, the low laughter, the invitation to play with them, the old soul pricked and biffed by their voices. Oh, they loved him well, they adored him, they had all the power, all the vitality. Can you imagine what, in the riot of their released imaginations they demanded of him? And he, the candle trembling in his hand, his whole body agitated, consenting, saying yes yes yes to their voices and going downstairs too quickly for his heart with them, tugged by their hands, yielding to their love and greed. And the dust rising in clouds from the boards as their feet kicked and scuffed along, dust falling from the ceilings, dribbling off knocked tables, grey dust and the dusk thickening around the candle. For a while then the three of them played, queer mad games that were exactly logical in the clear minds of the children, but confused, esoteric in the head of the old man.

Let two children go in such an empty, echoey, dusty old house and they will produce such a growth of image and fancy, of phantasy and realized dream, of terror and love, frightening and exciting themselves, daring to probe with their clean, sharp little minds into the corners and cupboards and closets of the past, dragging out ogres and phantoms by the dozen, holding up by the tails a kicking bunch of indefinite devils, that a merely rational, weak old mind, following at their vicious heels, will be overwhelmed, set upon by the screeching shapes invoked out of the fertile air by the childrens' cries.

A weak old man who had been used to going alone, quietly, almost invisible among these dead rooms, disturbing nothing, barely alive so that the presences left him alone, regarded him

as one of themselves you might say, and now here he was, at the heels of the children, dragged along in the wake of their noise and fury, glad of it yet terrified, feeling life open again over him, pour down into him (and dead spiders falling out of a tilted lampshade) a host of images and heat and opening door after door along the constricted corridors of his brain.

Leave it at that. Consider the children. The boy. Forget the girl for a moment. Consider the boy.

There is a centre, even in the youngest brain, of incredible age, a speck, an atom where the baby is old. Nothing can touch it. Far, far away from the eyelids it lies secure. And this boy, suddenly, in this dirty, breaking house, feels the speck leap, burn, shudder. He becomes old throughout his young body, an age too great for his shape possesses him. What is he to do? He looks shyly at his sister who looks innocently, gladly (full of unexploded fun) back at him, smiling. She knows nothing, she is devising games, secrets, terrors, glees, love—the escapade of love, here, in the old house, the most daring prank. She is all preparation, readiness. She has no idea of the age her brother has achieved.

He withdraws his eyes from her, turns his back rudely upon her, gazes through a door they have just opened, a door no one had opened for ten years, through which the old man himself can only look in amazement and curiosity. He didn't know the door was there, not such a door at all, and he mutters over and over into the bit of beard that is trying to climb into his mouth. The boy feels a terrible arrogance in his body and a premature power of a great need, a vague, shifting need, a need to explore and express. Then he points down the passage the opening of the door has revealed. Go down there, he says, not to his sister, but to the old man, go down there and hide. I will come and find you.

Hide and seek is it, the old man says, wiping the nervous beard from his damp lips, very well then, very well. He goes through the door and immediately the boy slams it behind him. I will count ten, he shouts loudly through the door. I will count ten and then I will come and find you.

The old man, alone in the passage, the first there for ten years, shivers about the flame of the candle. Then he hears

the counting behind the door, One, Two, Three, loud and slow like the tolling of a bell. Immediately he starts off, and the candle flame wraps back upon itself, flutters, and goes out. . . . The old man can hardly see. There is only a glimmer of light from an open door at the side of the passage. He looks in as he passes and studies the bare, dusty room through the broken window of which the last light of day dribbles. No place to hide there. He hurries on, in the darkness, still carrying the dead candle. A strand of his weak beard gets between his lips and he spits it out. At the end of the passage another door. He opens it.

The boy counts to ten, his voice like the tolling of a bell. Without the old man's candle it is dark but he doesn't care. His sister, who might have been afraid, seems to have vanished. He is not aware of her standing beside him. At the count of ten he leaps to the door, wrenches the handle round, and plunges into the darkness of the passage.

The girl has wandered alone to a window through which she can see out of the house. It is not a clear window, it is coated with dust and spiders webs and stains. There is a smell by it, the old man has been sick there. She leans her forehead, however, against the glass and looks out into the garden and sees . . . the old man, slipping among the weeds, just visible in the dying light. He vanishes among the contorted greenery and a bestial looking bush shudders as it conceals him. And then her brother coming slowly, searching, with a stick in his hand. She holds her breath.

Just as the boy is about to enter the bush in which the old man has hidden she taps with the knuckles of both hands against the glass and shakes her head from side to side as the boy stares at the window. She keeps shaking it. The boy steps up close to the window, tilts his head back to see up into it. His sister's face is vague and beautiful behind the dirty glass. She looks past him and sees the old man move from the bush and retreat deeper into the dark growths of the garden. She stops shaking her head and steps back from the window. Her heart is beating rapidly, for the first time she becomes afraid of the darkness.

In the garden the boy is angry. He realizes what his sister has done. He strikes madly at the bush from which the old

man, his victim, has escaped. He beats the crippled branches and heavy ugly leaves bitterly. Some of the leaves fall. A smell of loathsome sap rises from the severed stalks. The boy treads through the bush.

The old man struggles through the tangled, stinking excess of weed and bush. He gasps for air. Unnoticed by him the stars have come out, they are cold and clear above the garden. A street lamp from the street beyond the high garden wall makes a vague shine in the air. The old man is running round in circles and in careful circles, following him, the boy pursues. You might expect them, the frantic quarry, the deliberate hunter, to be changed through sheer intensity into a couple of distant stars, pushed aside in some corner of space to continue for ever the flight and pursuit. But the old man breaks from the undergrowth suddenly, sees a door, rushes for it, opens it, and falls into the arms of the sister, the little girl, who embraces him, looks past him with furious protecting eyes at the baffled, panting boy who brandishes a long crooked stick. The old man sinks slowly to the floor at her feet. He lies between them. They do not notice that he is dead. The girl reproaches the boy, she holds her love like a hood over the recumbent body.

And the darkness intensifies, becomes for the first time that evening the horror concealing darkness of which their beds at home are the vulnerable centres. They look down at the old man, surprised by his recumbence, his immobility. The girl kneels by his head, touches it, expects it to respond to the love in her fingers, expects the wrinkled dirty face to turn up and smile and be loved. It doesn't move. The boy raises his stick, though he does not and perhaps never did intend to strike. It was only a game, after all. Hide and seek. But how annoying now that the old man refuses any further excitement.

Get up, old man, the girl whispers, get up.

I'll kick him then, the boy shouts, draws back his foot—but his sister's body slides between him and the body of the old man. No you sha'n't, she says furiously, her love now an intensity almost beyond control. You'll have to kick me first.

The boy is puzzled. His strange adult powered rage, frustrated, stings in his mind. But he, and his sister, is now conscious of their loneliness in the dark empty house. We must

NORMAN GEAR

go home old man, the girl says intimately into the dead ear. Perturbed by the indifference of the ear she touches it with one pale extended finger. He's asleep, her brother announces, and suddenly steps one foot over the body and stands astride it, looking down as if it were a body he had defeated in combat. Through the open door into the garden comes a sigh of wind in the tangles of greenery. But by now the girl has squirmed low to the floor and put her head beside the old man's and looked into his face. But his eyes are open, she says in almost glad amazement, he just can't be asleep.

And then a horrible image comes into the boy's head. A pig's head, severed, on a butcher's plate, the neck all bloody—and the little red eyes open. The little red eyes open. He stoops down, grips his sister's arm, raises her, whispers into her ear. Their mouths half open. The girl begins to cry. They back away. . . . And four days later we find him. . . . And now the house is being pulled down, the garden cleared of the loathsome bushes and dwarf trees and the children are forgetting, or rather they have succeeded in bringing the old man to life in another, better form, they have got water colours now and there he is, on their frank pages, his cheeks rosy, his eyes blue, his limbs active, a gay, fresh, clean lovely old, old man.

NORMAN GEAR was born in 1920. He is self-educated, and is now working as a fitter in an aircraft factory. He has contributed poems to the *B.B.C.* and *Tribune*.

VAPOUR TRAIL

by MICHAEL KIDD

High up in the far, frozen blue
I watch his progress;
Mark the white pastel line
He draws on azure.
Only the pencilled curve I see,
Moving (like God's design)
In airs too high for me.

MICHAEL KIDD is the author of two novels and a book of verse. She lived in India for some time, and whilst there contributed to many Indian periodicals. Her third novel has just been completed.

BOOKS ON MUSIC

HAYDN. KARL GEIRINGER. Allen and Unwin. 21s.

MAURICE RAVEL. 'ROLAND-MANUEL. Dennis Dobson. 8s. 6d.

VERDI. FERRUCCIO BONAVIA. Dennis Dobson. 8s. 6d.

MUSIC FOR THE MULTITUDE. SIDNEY HARRISON. Michael Joseph. 10s. 6d.

EVENINGS WITH MUSIC. SYD SKOLSKY. Faber. 10s. 6d.

BOOKS on music are usually badly written: here we have three biographies and two 'Appreciations'. Books of these two kinds are usually better written than manuals on Keyboard Touch, The Folk Music of Ruritania, and the autobiographies of the Virtuosi, so we are lucky.

There is no relationship between literary and musical ability. Of a thousand persons, perhaps one hundred are really musical: literary ability will be as prominent among the hundred as among one hundred persons with red hair. There may be ten of the number who can write. But of these ten some are well off and lazy, others have had no opportunity of mastering enough of musical technique, others again have no time. Perhaps only one will apply himself seriously to writing. And even this one man in a thousand who actually does write on musical subjects, he is no genius: literary ability of the 'best of ten' order is not great. Hence not much can be expected of these books, nor of this review. Had Haydn, Ravel, and Verdi been 'Seasons' Thomson, Verlaine, and Goldoni, none of the three biographies here examined would have been published. Much more is expected from literary writers, if only because previous books on the subject have been on a fairly high level.

But Dr. Geiringer, whose English is wooden, has no peer: he is the first man to write seriously of Haydn as a great artist. Other writers direct into English have treated Haydn as a nice simple old gentleman, blandly suppressing any information to the contrary as 'unfit for publication': a nice old gentleman who wrote music as good as could be expected in the old days, before Beethoven and the March of Mind, that is to say.

But we are enjoying a Haydn renaissance. Two other books are coming out in a year or two, and they can be criticized more severely, that is to say, they can be compared with Geiringer. Rosemary Hughes is replacing the outworn Haydn volume in Dent's series of Master Musicians, and Dennis Dobson hopes to have a volume, much of it in score, named *Unknown Haydn*, from Karl Haas, of the London Baroque Ensemble. The Third Programme is giving us all Haydn's pianoforte sonatas, competently played. What we need is an opera, and Sadlers Wells, so courageous with the delightful *Il Quattro Rusteghi*, might, one hopes, try *Il Mondo della Luna*.

To return to Geiringer: we have the usual life, boyhood (fuller than ever before), youth in Vienna (disappointingly brief), visits to London (as full as anything before, but not noticeably more detailed), and then the Works. And here Dr. Geiringer spreads himself as much as one hundred demy octavo pages will allow, and such things as the pianoforte sonatas and the songs are treated in sufficient length to be of real help to the student. Of course we could do with much more: a series of volumes, one each for the Quartets, the Symphonies, the Sonatas, the Operas, the Oratorios, and one for Miscellaneous. But Dr. Geiringer has started things off: and not much more can be done until the huge Collected Edition of Breitkopf and Hartel can be proceeded with. There are plenty of monochrome illustrations, not all of them relevant, but some, such as a picture of the Opera Orchestra at Esterhaz, complete with Haydn at the flugel, are most valuable.

M. Roland-Manuel's study of his friend Ravel is, too, the best book in English on the subject, but it will soon be challenged by Norman Demuth in the Dent series. M. Roland-Manuel's architecture is the same as Dr. Geiringer's; Life: Works. But while in the Haydn the two portions were roughly equal, the Ravel is too detailed in the Life and too short in the Works. This so often happens in books written by friends: to wit, Koechlin's study of Fauré. There is, however, a valuable list of Ravel's works and also many photographs of the family-album sort. The translation is irritating, words like 'dominant' being used in their ordinary rather than in their

technical sense, Ravel being made to say that Debussy's *Arabesques* were 'not in existence' in 1906, allusions to what has, in fact, not gone before, and all the other pieces of grit which prevent fluent and pleasant perusal.

Mr. Bonavia, an experienced journalist, has written a much better piece of English in his study of Verdi, first published in 1930: but as a study of a great artist it seems rather superficial. It lacks aesthetic penetration. What makes *La Traviata* memorable? The secret eludes Mr. Bonavia (it eludes me), and he belongs to those who are happy describing the outwardness of music. The absence of an index and all similar apparatus is a serious fault.

The best writer of all (but the best among a poor lot, as already explained) is Sidney Harrison: but I find it difficult to be fair to those who try to take music to the multitude. Damn the multitude. It applauds everything, has no taste, drowns the best with the second best, prefers a Tchaikowsky concerto to one by Mozart, and very rarely reads a book on music. Books are read by the really musical, and these have the courage to tackle something tough, a treatise on counterpoint, or Spitta on Bach. This pap-feeding to folk whose room is preferable to their company, is rather nauseating. And how, in a 352 pager, can Mr. Harrison get it all in? Of course, he cannot, and his uneasy amalgamation of social history, musical history and biography, and the technicalities of harmony, orchestration, and rhythm will give many unsophisticated readers wrong impressions. Is it better to have wrong impressions than no impressions? Never to have heard of Haydn than to think of him as an elementary, forerunning Beethoven?

But Syd Skolsky, Mrs. Syd Skolsky, should have been included in the B.B.C.s 'Hurrah for Womanhood': earnest, a born unintellectual. The Orchestra is everything, and those to whom Music means the Symphony, and the Symphony means a series of solvable crossword puzzles, this book will be, as they say, 'a boon.' Nothing mental or spiritual is needed, just the book, a gramophone, and some discs.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

CHINESE GHOST AND LOVE STORIES. P'U SUNG-LING. Dennis Dobson. 12s. 6d.

THESE stories are selected from a very popular collection of some four hundred tales called *Liao Chai Chih Yi*, which was written during the later half of the seventeenth century and published by the author's grandson in 1740. The original work has been widely read and enjoyed in China for its concise yet elegant style and thrilling contents for over two centuries. The amorous adventures of foxes, which assume human shapes as beautiful, refined ladies, with handsome young scholars make the leading incidents. Their love affairs as a rule are ephemeral, lasting on the average from one evening to a few months. Since they are temporary, they do not interfere with ordinary family life, but offer a nice opportunity for the pedantic Confucian scholars to escape into the emotional world, which they could not experience otherwise in a period when the Manchu Empire was at its height of prosperity and when austerity and good morals were encouraged.

As the title in Chinese explains itself, the work is 'a product of boredom in a study'. The author must have been exceedingly bored with the Confucian ethical teachings, which he had to study in order to pass the Imperial Examination. In those days the sole mission of the intellectual was to enlighten the people, who could not read Confucius because of the difficulties of the language; in other words, his career was to be a civil servant. This goal he could not achieve without passing the Imperial Examination. It is obvious that a person like P'u Sung-Ling, with such creative imagination as is shown in the stories, was bound to fail in the attempt. The failure to be a civil servant, whose job was to rule for the Emperor, was a failure to be a practising Confucian. This frustration undoubtedly brought the author unemployment and consequently poverty, but freed him from the traditional inhibitions. That is why the stories are preposterously 'indecent and immoral' although the style is admirably academic.

Quaint though they appear, the tales are nevertheless

strongly human and realistic. They represent the secret whims and fantasies of a mind shackled superficially by the orthodox Confucian teachings. They contain a hidden rebellion, a protest against the artificial moral code, which the authorities employed to restrict the life and thought of the people. They expose the hypocrisy of the pedantic scholars, who pulled long faces as moral teachers, but who were never immune from the temptation of worldly passions. For, ironically enough, their love affairs with the foxes-spirits generally took place in their sacred studies or in the roadside inns on their way to the Capital for the Imperial Examination, just before they became rulers to enlighten the flock. Perhaps it is because of this highly human satire that the original manuscripts had to be kept secret till the author's third generation, and that even when it was published it had to remain anonymous at first.

Miss Rose Quong's translation conveys much of the original atmosphere, and the illustrations are simply enchanting.

CHUN-CHAN YEH

STRAVINSKY. ERIC WALTER WHITE. John Lehmann. 15s. So little has been written about Igor Stravinsky in English that any new competent study of his work is to be welcomed. This, so far, is the most useful book about him to appear, and is, of course, more objective than his own *Chroniques de ma vie*. But it does little to remove the difficulties which lie in the way of anyone seeking to get to know Stravinsky's music from the inside. In the first place, he seems to move behind a glass wall, silently, unimpassionately, as Mr. White stands outside and offers an interesting commentary on his movements. This curious feeling of remoteness may be partly due to the somewhat elusive nature of the composer himself.

Another rather disturbing point is the revelation that in a great many of his later works, Stravinsky has composed to illustrate a theory, as in the case of the *Duo Concertante* for violin and piano. Those who feel that despite his immense gifts and the genius displayed in the earlier ballets, Stravinsky is a composer with no clear idea of where he is going, are not helped by Mr. White's tendency to praise rather than to offer comparative criticism.

The two main defects in the book are the author's habit of leaving trailing biographical ends; and the lack of musical quotations. One instance of the former is the remark that the noble character of Stravinsky's first wife was demonstrated in what happened the year after 1916; but when we come to 1917 no mention of what did in fact happen is made, although presumably it had something to do with the Revolution. As to the latter fault, interesting as it is to know that the slow movement of a particular work opens with 'a somewhat viscous theme' accompanied by 'thick, sluggish chords', the reader can hardly be blamed for wishing that a quotation had been printed to give such commentary real meaning. Not everyone is within reach of the more obscure Stravinsky scores. The present paper difficulties, however, are no doubt to blame for the absence of quotations.

This, then, is a useful study which all those interested in modern music will find rewarding. But it is essentially a first study, and by no means the final word. That is unlikely to be written whilst the composer is still with us, so let us hope that its eventual appearance may be long delayed.

MAURICE LINDSAY

THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION. Edited by DENYS THOMPSON and JAMES REEVES. Muller. 8s. 6d.

IN the agricultural past an average mind could absorb the essentials of education from his environment, either without literacy or with no more formal training than that of the nearest dame-school. To-day the educationist has to work *against* the environment of his pupils and himself. 'Too often the child in his formative years,' say the editors of this symposium, 'receives his essential education from such influences as films and advertisements; with unremitting pressure a pattern of life is presented in which smart girls use fifteen toilet preparations before they are fit to be seen, and real men show their red blood by choosing the right tobacco.'

Some may scorn the notion that improved education in the schools can do anything very much to arrest this progress in depersonalization. But if the schools fail us, it is difficult to see how any other agency could succeed. It is the merit of this

book that the contributors realize the immense responsibility that is theirs to-day. Major Winkler, for instance, discusses 'the ends of education' from his experience as staff officer in that field during the war, and he concludes: 'The school is increasingly burdened with the task of re-creating a community. Burdened—or entrusted; because never before have the ends of education been so large, so important, or so difficult of attainment'

One obvious criticism the editors have anticipated. Apart from their own introduction and conclusion, and the contributions of Winkler and T. C. Worsley, the chapters are, at first sight, specialist chapters: O'Malley on English, Mellers on music, Green on art and crafts, Jackson on history, Powell on geography, Palmer on science, Bronowski on mathematics, Hackett on modern languages. But so far are these men from seeing their own subject and nothing else that the Editors can remark in the concluding chapter: 'The "specialists" have had their say. As Editors, we note with some satisfaction how unspecialized, on the whole, their contributions are. Until a century or so ago, an educated man or woman was not a specialist . . . Specialism, in the bad sense, it should never again be the effect of education to produce. The first need is an integrated and balanced curriculum, and this can be brought into being only by integrated and balanced teachers.'

Not so very long ago this cry was in the wilderness; now it is receiving attention by the most conservative-minded. Every intelligent parent should read this book; teachers will hardly need any recommendation to it.

R. C. CHURCHILL

THE BRONTËS. PHYLLIS BENTLEY. *English Novelists Series*. Home and Van Thal. 6s.

A SCHOOLMISTRESS, newly appointed to teach English in a large secondary school, recently told me that she was disturbed to find that her pupils knew the Brontës only through the medium of the American film *Devotion*, with its distortion of facts and its emotional falsifications. Miss Bentley's practical unsentimental monograph, should take a useful place in school libraries as a corrective. The general reader may even find it a

little too much like a school text-book¹, possibly because of the division of the material into separate biographical and critical sections. Of these the biographical section is the stronger, though Miss Bentley touches too lightly upon the period of school life at Cowan Bridge, which impressed Charlotte Brontë so deeply that it produced one of the most intense passages in *Jane Eyre*. She is also curiously unaware of any psychological link between Emily and Branwell Brontë—she is, indeed, always more at home with Charlotte than with Emily—so that she sees no explanation for Emily's rapid decline after Branwell's death. She does, however, bring out very clearly the importance of the Brontës's childhood fantasies—the sagas of Glass Town, Angrians, and Gondals—as a clue to their later work, and she has expert knowledge of the Yorkshire setting, not only the moors, becks, and villages, but also the very bone and fibre of the people.

This knowledge, though valuable, has its dangers, and to me it seems to unduly influence Miss Bentley's appraisal of Charlotte Brontë's novels. She places *Shirley*, a novel of many fine passages but of many *longueurs*, above *Villette*, a matter of personal taste to which she has, of course, every right; but her insistence that *Villette* is not a success, is 'the least well loved of Charlotte Brontë's three major novels' is open to question. There is an almost unanimous agreement among other critics of the Brontës that *Villette* is Charlotte's greatest novel. 'Shirley,' to quote Mr. E. F. Benson, 'cannot be put in the same class as *Jane Eyre* or *Villette* . . . *Villette* to a far higher degree than anything she had ever written, was herself, and it was composed of her own experience, her character, and her soul.' 'It is because of this increasing mastery, this new power in handling unsympathetic types, because in short, of its all-round excellence that *Villette* must count as Charlotte Brontë's masterpiece,' Miss May Sinclair tells us. 'Her candid and clairvoyant vision is displayed over and over again throughout her works, but never more notably than in two instances which make *Villette* one of the most interesting of English novels,' Miss Rebecca West writes; and, among recent critics, Demetrios Capetanakis commented on the warm and moving qualities of *Villette*, 'Charlotte Brontë's masterpiece.'

Emily Brontë is beyond Miss Bentley's scope—perhaps her 'death-rebuking star' is only within the range of a poet's vision—but there is some attempt to do justice to the inevitably overshadowed Anne. Miss Bentley's study contains nothing new either in material or thought, but it is a competent introduction to its subject and a sincere beginning to what promises to be an interesting new series.

BARBARA COOPER

FRENCH TAPESTRY. Edited by ANDRÉ LEJARD. Elek. 35s. Now and again, suddenly, a man may be reminded of the dignity to which human beings can lay claim. Recently this writer had the happy shock of so remembering and it was brought about by the sight of an embroidered garment once worn at the Court in China. At the hem was the immemorial pattern of waves; waves of the sea; bow of the air; billows time or eternity. The apparel was a beneficent lovely proof that there need be no discrepance between a man and that much of glory.

The recent show in London of French tapestries moved the heart in somewhat the same way: 'How precious is Europe from whence these things come; how darling is France.' Prayer unstinted work, and the expectation of resurrection is the only fitting response to the demand put upon us by *The Lady with the Unicorn*.

Here, printed in France, is a volume that in Britain will permanently celebrate the splendid advent of the French tapestries. The book contains one hundred and twenty-nine illustrations, several of them large coloured plates; the Preface is by Monsieur Pierre Verlet, Curator of the Objets d'Art Department at the Louvre Museum, Professor at the Boule School.

The Preface is followed by an article entitled *Tapestry Technique* by Guillaume Janneau, and *Tapestry in Interior Decoration* by Pierre Verlet. Gislaïne Yver, of the Louvre, gives a chapter entitled *French Tapestry from its Origins to the Foundation of the Gobelins Factory*. Roger Armand Weigert follows with *The Beauvais Factory*, and Genges Fontaine subscribes the next article which is entitled *The Gobelins*. Monsieur Weigert's

second learned contribution to this book is *The Marche Factories, Aubusson and Felletin*.

The history and the technique of French carpet-weaving is given by Juliette Niclausse; the concluding paper called *The Revival of Tapestry in France* is by Guillaume Janneau. Here, amongst others, are shown the hieratic designs of J. Lurcat and decorative cartoons by Marcel Gromaire.

But it is the late XIV, XV, and XVI century tapestries that hold in everness a miracle of field-flowers, that hold in magical suspension roses unfaded and a vintage freed of time. No wonder that Kings and Princes took tapestries to hearten them on tented battlefields: no wonder that victors demanded such in payment of ransom. How exciting is the late XIVth century *Apocalypse* from Angers. St. John adores the feet of the haggard Christ behind Whom are seven candlesticks; in His right hand are seven wounds, like stars, across His lips is a sword.

The volume ends with words by Monsieur Janneau on the possibility of a revival of craftsmanship. He writes: 'The possibilities of such a revival, towards which many are at present directing their efforts, are summed up on the spiritual, as on the technical and utilitarian plane, in one principle; the striving for quality.'

VIOLET CLIFTON

THE LAKES. Edited by G. S. SANDILANDS. Illustrated in colour by E. W. TRISTRAM. Muller. 15s.

TRAVELLERS' VERSE. Chosen by M. G. LLOYD THOMAS. Lithographs by EDWARD BAWDEN. Muller 10s.

TRANSLATION. Second Series. Edited by NEVILLE BRAYBROOKE and ELIZABETH KING. Phoenix Press. 10s. 6d.

A MIRROR FOR FRENCH POETRY, 1840-1940. Selected and Edited by CECILY MACKWORTH. Routledge. 10s. 6d.

THE Lakes are heavy with literary association, and as Wordsworth, Southey, Arnold, and Ruskin are writers who rouse in me feelings of only mild apathy, I am the more grateful to Mr. Sandilands for not allowing them to dominate his book overwhelmingly. Wordsworth is there, of course—with, among other items, a description of a visit from Landor, and two pieces

on railways; one, as disturbers of the peace (verse) and the other as a source of investment (prose). But there are plenty of others—Coleridge and de Quincey, naturally; then Miss Martineau, Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Gaskell; a schoolgirl's recollections of Mrs. Humphrey Ward, and the life, as opposed to only the literature, of the Lakes is reflected in cuttings from newspapers, parish magazines, and excerpts from museum catalogues. The whole is embellished with full-page illustrations in colour by E. W. Tristram.

If I might have complained of too much unescapably included in a Lakeland anthology, I feel on the other hand that too much has been omitted from Miss Lloyd Thomas's. It is true that her book includes, roughly, the world. She takes the reader from West to East and back again—a tripper through literature, if I may say so, and with rather a trippery taste. Sixty-three poets are used as guides. The most fortunate inclusions are excerpts from Monk Gibbon's *Journal of a West Indian Proprietor*, and from Peacock's *Gryll Grange*. I was glad to see Daniel's *Ulysses and the Siren*, but shocked at the absence of Drayton's *To the Virginian Voyage*. There is neither Chaucer nor Keats (though the travel is allowed to be fancy as well as fact). Shakespeare is represented by some quite unimportant lines from *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Twelfth Night* (no *Tempest*). Browning only by a quotation from *Waring*, and extracts from Tennyson's *Enoch Arden* are preferred over what I should have considered the indispensable *In the Valley of Caunterets*. Among moderns we have Eliot, Plomer, MacLeish, Turner, 'Belloc, Chesterton, Empson, and Alun Lewis, but Flecker's *Glion, Sirmio, Rioupéroux or Brumana* are disdained for the comparatively irrelevant and rather whimsey *Lord Arnaldos*. Miss Lloyd Thomas is free to voyage where she chooses, but it is surely taking liberties with a reader's just expectations to call a book *Travellers' Verse* and omit, of all things, Marvell's remote Bermudas? I find this book pretentious, arbitrary in plan, and arch in execution. Edward Bawden's lithographs are, as may be imagined, a delight, though perhaps his toy-theatre idiom does not quite sufficiently differentiate between countries.

It is a pleasant sign of interest in what is being written



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abroad that a second series or issue of *Translation* should appear. The response evoked two years ago by the first justified for this the more permanent form of a book. The publishers state that in fifteen languages (I make them only twelve) over one hundred poets are represented. The translators include E. Allison Peers and J. B. Trend, and names particularly familiar to our readers will be those of Vernon Watkins, Hugo Manning, James Kirkup, Ernst Sigler, and W. K. Matthews. I am sorry to see nothing by Fred Marnau, astonished at the complete absence of Danish work, and find the South American section weak.

The appeal of this volume lies principally in the poetry translated, in the literature or groups of literature made available. Miss Mackworth, in her book, is more specific; she has designed it to show 'the sort of poetry that has been written in France during roughly the last one hundred years'; but also 'the translations have been chosen as far as possible according to their merits as poems in themselves'. Some of these are more noticeable than their quality as translations—elementary misreadings and errors here, as elsewhere, occur. Still, in the main, Miss Mackworth may be said to have fulfilled her hope that 'the anthology will create something of the atmosphere of the "feel" of this poetry'—which is printed in the original on pages opposite the translations. The selection is wide, and translations come from such varied hands as Roy Campbell, Flecker, Sir John Squire, David Gascoyne, G. S. Fraser, Vernon Watkins, and Francis Scarfe. Cecily Mackworth herself contributes a useful introduction and ten pages of notes on the French poets represented.

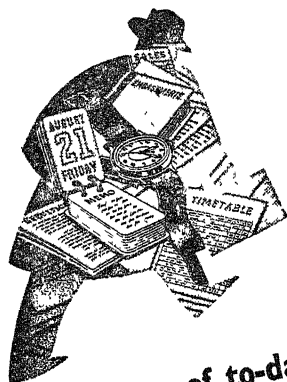
ROBERT HERRING

ESCAPE FROM JULIA. CHRIS MASSIE. Faber. 8s. 6d.

IF HE HOLLERS LET HIM GO. CHESTER HIMES. Falcon Press. 8s. 6d.

THE HOUSE BY THE SEA. JON GODDEN. Michael Joseph. 9s. 6d.

WHEN a novelist creates what he believes to be a sympathetic character it doesn't always follow that readers will reciprocate this feeling. Mr. Chris Massie, for instance, evidently thinks



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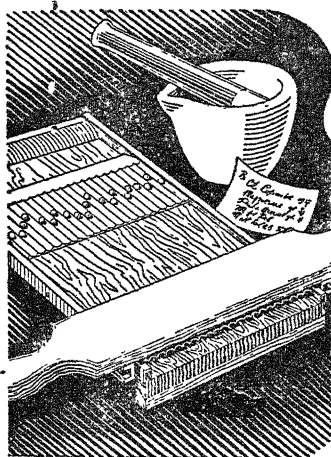
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that his hero, Rodney Thistlewaite, is worthy of the utmost sympathy. We are told that he is handsome, unhappily married for the second time, intelligent, and kind almost to the point of softness to his employeés. Yet, despite all this, I disliked him intensely. This may have been because Mr. Massie is so insistent on Mr. Thistlewaite's 'good' points; I feel that Mr. Massie and I could never agree about these in anybody. Mr. Thistlewaite is a publican—not an ordinary publican, mind you, but an 'Oxford educated' one, and I have the feeling that he looks down upon and resents the clientèle of his pub in the East End of London. For: 'His quota of spirits was low and getting lower, and he liked to reserve it for customers of long standing who were in the habit of taking it—business men who drank quietly and added something to the respectable tone of the house. If he had his way he would have served no spirits on the public side. It required a certain character and poise to take whisky. It was not a working man's drink.' I could never feel any sympathy for anybody who felt like this. And perhaps that's why I felt such great sympathy for Julia, who is a dipsomaniac. Mr. Massie goes to great lengths to build Julia up as an unpleasant type, but as far as I was concerned he did not succeed. I was sorry for her having to live amongst such a lot of unpleasant people, all of whom were trying to make it possible for Mr. Thistlewaite to 'escape' from her, even to the length of murdering her either theoretically or practically. Who can blame her for being a dipsomaniac with a stick like Thistlewaite for a husband, an unpleasant girl like Christine for a stepdaughter (what a horror she is, so priggish and so sure in the knowledge that she is 'lovely' and a showpiece!) and an equally unpleasant piece of work like Vida Mayerl waiting to step into her shoes? Mr. Massie's publishers claim that he has a quality that enables him to describe both the macabre and the beautiful, and to create scenes and characters that strike and stay in the mind of the reader. He certainly has the power to create the macabre—this is well done in the scene where Raymond Dawes hangs himself on the Christmas tree—but I cannot agree about the others. I found the situations and dialogue artificial to a degree. The scene in the sanatorium between Raymond Dawes, the drunken young priest,

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and Julia is unbelievably. When you're going to make a pass at a woman you don't say: 'I'm not going. Not unless you dismiss me. How do these things happen? How do you make love to a woman?' 'You astonish and embarrass me,' she told him. But not as much as Mr. Massie astonishes and embarrasses the reader. This is only one piece of phoney dialogue. There are complete incidents so artificial that I wonder any author of standing could write them, far less get his publishers to print them. It is Chris Massie's tenth novel, but the first I've read. I hope the others are better.

In the same way, Chester Himes' hero, Bob Jones, is meant to be sympathetic, but to my way of thinking fails utterly. The novel is told in the first person, and Mr. Himes is so angry about the colour-bar and Jim Crow and all, that he splutters all over the place. Bob is an educated Negro and a leaderman in an American West Coast shipyard. He has a chick of his own race called Alice, but he has a yen for a no-good white woman called Madge. He suspects Alice of being a lesbian, so maybe that's why he goes in such a big way for Madge. 'All of a sudden I knew I was getting ready to go back and see Madge. Getting charged. Getting my guage up to be a damned fool about a white woman, to blow my simple top, maybe get into serious trouble—about a slut any white bum could have at will. Just to get even with Alice. It was crazy; I knew it was crazy, like a sign I once saw that said, "Read and run, nigger; if you can't read, run anyhow." ' I wish Mr. Himes had stopped and read and considered; he might have written a better novel. As it is he's written one which doesn't do any credit to the negro race. In it he had a discussion about the work of Richard Wright where he says: 'All Wright did (in *Native Son*) was write a vicious crime story.' Not half as vicious as this. When Mr. Himes learns to write with the restraint of Richard Wright he may get somewhere. In his introduction Jack Aistrop says: 'Bob carries his blackness like a provoking slogan and is driven even to the contemplation of murder to defend it.' I would say it goes even deeper than that. Intolerant hatred for everything white shrieks its way through the book. It's like Bob's car, which to him is a sort of god—he wants to run over everybody white as he rushes along with



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open exhaust so that the reader becomes exhausted, too. Mr. Himes should take it easy and go into second gear. He should forget that he wants to look *sharp* and wear a chip on his shoulder all the time. For when he forgets to be angry he writes well. On two simply-written pages (152-153) he creates a better effect than he does in all the rest of the angry splutter.

I am not sure whether Miss Jon Godden intends us to be sympathetic towards her American deserter or not, but whatever she intended I was, like her heroine, for him in a big way, even though he had murdered two people before he came to hide in the lonely Cornish home of a middle-aged spinster. *The House by the Sea* is a good novel. If you want a novel that has charm, individuality, and distinction, read this.

FRED URQUHART

A FREE HOUSE; OR THE ARTIST AS CRAFTSMAN.

Being the Writings of Walter Richard Sickert. Edited by Sir OSBERT SITWELL. Macmillan. 25s.

NOT the least remarkable thing about Walter Richard Sickert—or Richard Sickert as he preferred to call himself in later life—was his passionate interest in men and women of all sorts. No incident from daily life, however trivial, no human situation, however hackneyed, was beneath his notice. No character was too dull not to be enlivened by the extreme vivacity of his observation. Moved, like so many other great artists, by an insatiable curiosity, he had assembled an almost encyclopædic knowledge of certain aspects of London life. How far this curiosity of his was purely artistic and how far human, will always be a fascinating if unprofitable question. It may be that there was no distinction, that the professional artist was no more than the man intensely concerned with the technical problems of using the material abundantly to hand. His work was in the world, not apart from the world. Whatever was mysterious about his art was mysterious only in the old sense of mystery as technical knowledge and technical cunning. When Sickert writes about painting he writes as a Chippendale might on the craftsmanship of the cabinet-maker. For as Sickert himself said, 'An artist is only Greek for "joiner".'

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reader is rather fed his reactions; but this is not too important, as Mr. Delius plays fair^{ish} and has words to say about the colour-bar and slums and the make-believes which cover a Johannesburg roof because real slates would be smashed by the hail storms. A nice production and a good introduction.

Those who feel they cannot export themselves spatially may yet find some relief by travelling in time, and Mr. Warner provides a suitable gift book for a journey in history. But note this is a collection of miniature portraits of historical figures for those who are already historically-minded and can respond to the class-room ring of sentences which begin 'Once the sword was in its scabbard . . .' and 'The Act of Oblivion of 1660 . . .' But a young reader will not be offended by intentional writing-down because the essays are really written for the general public. The young, though, are most likely to appreciate them, for the author admits his material is readily accessible and that his work is not for the sophisticated.

RONALD DEWSBURY

EDITORIAL

February, 1948

PSYCHO-SHAKE is to blame. And psycho-shake will be to blame. I am not one of those who normally feel that life is an old and complex organization contrived for the express purpose of doing me down. Indeed, if asked, I would incline to say that Luck, or at any rate Fortune, is my middle name. But henceforth whatever happens, I shall know it is psycho-shake's fault. I shall feel now that it is no use smiling at disasters; for how can you smile at things you have willed yourself into? And, of course, it is the cunning of psycho-shake that it will will me into them. Already the omens appear. And not only omens.

But let me begin at the start.

There was I, a visiting editor . . . no, something even more 'ham' is needed. Very well, then. Let's go . . . It was New Year's Eve in New York. (You must always begin this kind of story with 'it'.) It was snowing outside. Inside, logs blazed on the hearth (they really did—real ones). There was I, a visiting editor, at a party in Greenwich village. My hostess, Mrs. Simon, had already made me feel at home. All was kindness, cheer, and yet withal decorum. And then psycho-shake took a hand.

I must make clear that this is not that form of conversation, so fashionable, which begins, 'My *dear*, my psychiatrist says—' and whoever mentions Freud first scores a point, then handing the service to the adherents of Jung, Adler or the season's newest discovery. No, psycho-shake is a toy. At first sight it looks like a slicked-up version of a kaleidoscope, being a small tube, with glass at each end. But, alas, the pieces which make up the pattern—why they are nothing more than one's life, one's fate, one's whole future, one's past as well. On one end of this tube you place your hand for ten seconds. The other end contains a bubble, which according to the pressure and

heat of your palm (ay, there's the rub) swerves to various replies written round the tube. You ask only questions which can be answered directly. Naturally my first was 'Will our circulation go up next year?' 'NO' said the tube, infuriated to be played the fool with. 'Will the Government give us more paper?'—'Doubtful,'—'Will we improve in three years' time?'—'Ask later.' At this point, I noticed a certain uneasiness on the part of my hosts. It seemed better to bring things to a head. 'Will my readers survive my editing?' The reply was 'Why not?' 'Should I be wise to stop editing?'—'Yes.' 'Am I likely to?' Ah, alas for your hopes—NO.

I began to think psycho-shake did not like me. 'Have you,' I asked, 'a personal vendetta against me?' 'Most decidedly.' There was nothing for it but for others to come to my aid. One by one they did, asking questions about themselves, sliding in one about me when the current seemed favourable. The answers to their own questions were usually polite, though a best seller was told that she would *not* finish her new novel this year. One lady was frank, felt the toy must not be duped, and asked only of me. The answers were always the same. Finally, feeling I might be an unwelcome presence in the home, I suggested it might be as well if I committed suicide. 'Undoubtedly.' 'Perhaps I *am* dead already?' 'Yes.'

Then a legal mind showed of what stuff legal minds are made. He knew it was no use asking if there was any hope for Herring. He said, 'Will there EVER be any hope for Herring, in this or any other life?' 'Quite likely.' Lukewarm, you see, but not cold. And at least not actively freezing.

* * *

What happened? Well, what *had* happened? Coming events cast their shadows before . . . I had bathed, the morning I left Jamaica, in sun and soft Caribbean. On landing at Miami, a place I hadn't expected to see, I was told New York was having the worst blizzard in history. It was some comfort to think New York was running true to form and having not just a blizzard, but the worst of all. Planes could not get through. So we flew to Washington, which we reached at one a.m. and left at three, in a sort of milk train which got us into New

York five hours later, flinging us as it were on our faces into three feet of snow outside Pennsylvania Station.

None of which mattered, save that Eastern Airlines had decided my overnight bag was too big, and took it from me. It contained scarves, jumpers, gloves with which I had meant to mitigate the change of temperature. I travelled in tropical clothes, and reached New York saying, as far as I could say anything, 'Double-pneumonia, here I come.'

I won't say anything of New York, because I don't see how a visiting editor can. It seems to me it is those who live there can tell me, and indeed must tell me, what they think of New York. Not I them.

But when I left—then psycho-shake resumed its sway. I was flying on the new non-stop sleeper service, New York to London direct. It was a forty-eight seater, but there were only seven passengers. That may be why we had no sleepers. Setback number one. Or maybe because it was too bumpy. Setback number two. I dozed off in my seat, after the usual appalling dinner—something must really be done about the meals served on all airlines. One pays enough, God knows, but the only tolerable meal I had on the whole trip was that served by British West Indian between Ciudad Trujillo and St. Kit's. I woke up to see the notice illuminated 'Fasten your landing belts'. The other six passengers were talking Spanish at the far end of the plane. There was no one to tell me Constellations usually flash on that sign if they bump. So I considered for some time that there was nowhere to land, until the lightning annoyed me. I never do like thunderstorms anywhere, so I went to sleep again. I woke up to find one of the six South Americans had passed out and was having oxygen applied. 'Extraordinary,' said a steward, 'we're only at twenty thousand.' The use of oxygen meant we could not smoke. So I again went to sleep.

This time I was woken by the hostess. 'Wake up, brother. It's brekkie.' Something in my mien must have looked sour, for she explained, 'It's two a.m., that's seven English, we've done it in nine and one-half hours and land in one hour.' Sure enough we did. The clocks at Heath Row said eight, my watch said three—and it felt like three. We'd had one dawn

EDITORIAL

upstairs, around two. Then we came through the clouds into darkness and had a second dawn, down below. I felt the only logical continuation was either to keep on going down—a mine, say—or else take off at once for Istanbul, Peking, or the Cape. Instead, I found myself in a bus, driving up that familiar road from Heath Row. I was back in my home by half-past nine. There was little unpacking, for air only allows you sixty-six pounds. So there was nothing to do but go to my office, which I was in precisely twelve hours after leaving New York. I couldn't help feeling that an anti-climax, and for that I blame—psycho-shake. As I also blame it for the fact my house was burgled the night before I returned. But it will not have it all its own way, for that same legal mind who had caused it to emit a faint ray of hope concerning future lives, has sent me a talisman to offset that fell toy. Thus encouraged, I have been able to plan for March the publishing of some chapters from a novel of Jamaica by Victor Reid, and to follow this in April with a completely Jamaican number.

* * * * *

Since writing this, I have learned that the proofs of that issue have gone down off Bermuda on the lamented Tudor IV "Star Tiger". This may delay the number, but a further set has been sent.

A DISCOVERY OF THE BARMUDAS

WINIFRED GRAHAM WILSON

WHEN Shakespeare made Ariel say to Prospero

... once
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew
From the still-vex'd Bermoothes

he did so with calculated effect. For no other source of the dew could have found so much favour in the ears of the first audiences of *The Tempest* as those storm-swept islands of the North Atlantic. Ever since the time, almost a century before the play's first appearance, that reports had come back to Europe of Juan Bermudez' shipwreck there, men's imaginations had been stirred by the sinister character the Bermudas were reputed to possess.

Juan Bermudez set out from Spain in 1515, with a cargo of hogs for Cuba. But the hogs never reached their destination; the few of them that managed to survive the shipwreck found instead a home on the Bermudas. No streams or wells of fresh water irrigated the islands, so that the hogs had to manage as best they could, with the rain that fell plentifully there. Perhaps, too, like Prospero, they found virtue in Bermudan dew. At any rate, as time proved, they flourished, their descendants eventually serving the needs of shipwrecked Englishmen.

For nearly a century then all was rumour concerning the Bermudas, for they *were never inhabited by any Christian or heathen people, but ever esteemed, and reputed, a most prodigious and enchanted place, affording nothing but gusts, stormes, and foule weather, which made every Navigator and Mariner to avoid them, as Scylla and Charibdis; or as they would shunne the Devil himself; and no man was ever heard, to make for the place, but as against their wils, they have by stormes and dangerousnesse of the rocks, lying seven leagues into the Sea, suffered shipwarcke.*

All might still have remained rumour for yet another

century, had not a very determined effort been initiated in 1608 to make a success of the colonizing of Virginia. True the first attempt had been a failure, but it was felt by a number of influential people that a second effort would have a very different result. An extremely favourable charter was granted by James I, and almost immediately 'a campaign was launched to raise the needed funds and enlist volunteers for the proposed expedition'.¹ And what a campaign! Tracts and pamphlets appeared telling of the wealth of Virginia, urging the advantages of a political conquest of North America and stressing 'the Christian duty of carrying salvation to the benighted heathen'² inhabiting the New World. 'The fifty-six Livery Companies made generous contributions', and books were opened in the city for subscription by those who wished to invest money in the enterprise as a business speculation. The response of the public was instant and enthusiastic. Even before the charter was sealed, it was able to list as 'adventurers' in the Company 21 peers, 96 knights, 53 captains, 28 esquires, and more than 400 others—professional men, tradesmen and citizens from all walks of life.'³

Among the peers were three men whom we connect at once with Shakespeare: Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery. The first we recall as the man to whom *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece* were dedicated; while to Pembroke and Montgomery the dedication of the First Folio was inscribed. Heading the list of the 'Royal Council for Virginia' which was set up by James's charter were Southampton and Pembroke. Southampton indeed had been 'one of the prime movers in organizing the Company, in drafting its charter and in directing its affairs'.⁴ No wonder that Shakespeare was interested in the movement, no wonder that he followed with care the details of the arrangements for the great venture, with Virginia, earth's only paradise, as its objective.

^{1, 2} Introduction by Joseph Quincy Adams to *A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels*. Silvester Jourdain, 1610. Scholars' Facsimiles and Reprints. New York, 1940.

^{3, 4} Joseph Quincy Adams.

By June, 1609, all was ready and 'n the eighth day of that month nine ships set out for North America. One of them, *The Sea-Venture*, commanded by the famous navigator, Captain Newport, was 'a great newe ship far stronger than all the rest.'¹ It was indeed a ship of some three hundred tons, and in this ship sailed Sir Thomas Gates, the Lieutenant-General of the Company, as well as Sir George Somers, the Company's Admiral. There were as many as a hundred and fifty colonists in this particular ship, and among them was Silvester Jourdain, a man who well knew how to tell a story. And as events turned out he found he was given a wonderful story to tell.

Right up to July 25th *The Sea-Venture* 'kept companye with the rest of the fleet to the height of 30 degrees; and being then assembled to consult touching divers matters, they were surprised with a most extreame violent storm, which scattered the whole fleet, yet all the rest bent their course for Virginia, where, by God's speciall favour, they arrived safely.'² But not immediately nor all at once, for the storm was of unimagined ferocity so that winds and seas seemed to be as mad as fury and rage could make them. Darkness like hell settled over the waters and thunder crashed so loudly that the senses of all were overmastered. Worst of all, there appeared on *The Sea-Venture* 'a little round light, like a faint starre, trembling and streaming along with a sparkling blaze, halfe the height upon the Maine Mast, and shooting sometimes from Shroud to Shroud.'³

When the tempest was over four of the battered ships managed to find each other again and make their way to Jamestown. The rest of the fleet, one by one, with long intervals between, eventually reached port. But *The Sea-Venture* was not among them, so that as time went on, she was given up as lost with all souls on board. 'A report of the terrible fate that presumably had overtaken the Admiral-ship reached London in October, 1609, to create a sensation of the first

¹ Edmund Howes. Continuation of Stow's *Annals*.

² Edmund Howes.

³ Cited by Joseph Quincy Adams from William Strachey's account of the shipwreck, circulated among the Virginia Company.

magnitude. The possibility that the missing venturers were safe could not seriously be entertained, and, as month after month passed without word from them, all hope was gradually dissipated. In the course of time—for more than a year of silence rolled by—the disaster faded from the minds of men,¹ though only for a period.

The circumstances of the missing venturers were in fact far other than Englishmen at home presumed. To realize clearly what transpired it is best to read the story in Silvester Jourdain's own words. *With the violent working of the Seas, he says, our ship became so shaken, torne, and leaked, that shee received so much water as covered two tire of hogsheads above the ballast; that our men stooed up to the middles, with buckets, baricos, and ketiles, to baile out the Water, and continually pumped for three dayes and three nights together, without any intermission; and yet the water seemed rather to increase than to diminish; in so much that all our men, being utterly spent, tyred and disabled for longer labour, were even resolved without any hope of their lives, to shut up the hatches and to have committed themselves to the mercy of the sea, (which is said to be merclesse) or rather to the mercy of their mighty God and redeemer (whose mercies exceed all his works).*

So sure indeed seemed the prospect of sinking that some of the men *having some good and comfortable waters in the ship, fetcht them, and drunke one to the other, taking their last leave one of the other, untill their more joyfull and happy meeting in a more blessed world; when it pleased God . . . so to direct and guide our ship . . . that Sir George Sommers, sitting upon the poope of the ship (where he sate three dayes and three nights together, without meales meate, and little or no sleepe) . . . happily discryed land.*

At this point Sir George was anxious to have the pumping and bailing restarted, but those who had worked so hard before land was sighted *were so over wearied and their spirits so spent with long fasting, and continuance of their labour that for the most parte they were fallen asleepe in corners, and wheresoever they chanced first to sit or lie: but hearing news of land, wherewith they grew to be somewhat revived, being carried with wil and desire beyond their strength, every man busled up . . . to performe as much as their weake force would permit.*

¹ Joseph Quincy Adams.

Weak the men might be, yet they managed to keep the ship afloat, so that she lasted long enough to be carried in between two rocks *where shee was fast lodged and locked for further budging*. Not only so, but sufficient time was gained with the *helpe of her boat and skiffe safely to set and convey the men ashore (which were one hundred and fifty in number)*. Some part of the *goodes and provision which the water had not spoyled* were also saved, with all the *tackling of the ship and much of the yron about her, which were necessities not a little available for the building and furnishing of a new ship and pinnis which were made there, for the transporting and carrying of all those souls to Virginia*.

What surprised the shipwrecked people more than anything else was to find, as Jourdain puts it, *the ayre so temperate and the Country so abundantly fruitful of all fit necessities for the sustentation and preservation of man's life that . . . notwithstanding we were there for the space of nine months (few dayes over or under), not only well refreshed, comforted, and with good satiety contented, but out of the abundance thereof provided with some reasonable quantity and porportion of provision to carry us to Virginia*.

Once ashore everie man disposed and applyed himselfe to search for and to seeke out such releefe and sustentation as the Country afforded. Sir George Sommers, a man inured to extremities . . . went and found out sufficient, of many kind of fishes, and so plentifull thereof, that in halfe an houre, he tooke so many great fishes with hookes, as did suffice the whole company one day. And fish is there so abundant, that if a man steppe into the water, they will come round about him, so that men were faine to get out for feare of byting.

Silvester Jourdain leaves us in no doubt as to his appreciation of all the piscatory richness of the Bermudan waters. Not only were the fish very *fat and sweete* but they were of great variety: rock fish, mullets, pilchards, crayfishes and *divers kindes of great fishes the names of them unknowne* to him. There was also plenty of provision ashore, including *a great abundance of hogs*, (welcome descendants of Bermudez' Cuban cargo), as that there were taken by Sir George Sommers who was the first that hunted for them, to the number of two and thirty at a time which he brought to the company in a boate, built by his owne hands. There were fowle too in great numbers on the Ilands . . . being of the *bignesse of a good Pidgeon*, and laying egges as big as hen egges which they laid

daily, even *although men^c sat down amongst them*. Like the fish these birds were *fat and sweete*, especially the young ones. There was yet another *Sea fowle that lay in little holes in the ground, like unto a cony-hole, in great numbers; exceeding good meat, (and once again) very fat and sweet*.

Of herons there was *also great store and plenty . . . familiar and tame*. There were even *white herons, without so much as a blacke or gray feather on them, with other small birds so tame and gentle that, as Jourdain relates, (with, one cannot help feeling a heart-twist in the telling), a man walking in the woods with a sticke, and whistling to them they wil come and gaze on you, so neare that you may strike and kill many of them*.

To feed a hundred and fifty castaways was no small matter; all that was edible was pressed into service. Jourdain mentions *Tortoses (which some call Turtles)*, for instance, whose *meate was very good meate, yeelding great store of oyle . . . which either for frying or baking did us very great pleasure*. These *Tortoses*, we learn, could carry a *bushel of egges in one of their bellies, sweeter than any henne egge*. We learn too of the *divers fruits in great abundance: prickled pears, which continue green upon the tries all the yeare; also great plenty of Mulberries, white and red, on which Silke-Wormes yeelded cods of silke, both white and yellow, being some course and some fine*. There is mention also of the *Palmito tree with its very sweet berry, upon which the hogs doe most feede, and the infinite number of Cedar trees, (the farrest, to Jourdain's mind, in the world) bringing forth a very sweete berry, and wholesome to eate*.

In fact the islands were all but perfect, *affording no venomous creature, or so much as a Rat or mouse, or any other thing unwholesome*. With the *great store of Pearle, some of them very faire, round and Orientall; the good quantity of Amber Greece and that of the best sort*, there were riches of quite another kind. Further, there was also *great plenty of Whales, very easie to be killed, coming so usually and ordinarily to the shore that Jourdain and his companions heard them often times in the night abed, and saw them neare the shore in the daytime*. Jourdain saw too *plenty of Hawkes and something which through forgetfulness he almost omitted to mention*. That was the *very good Tobacco*, which presumably the castaways found greatly to their liking.

During their stay *there was a marriage between two English*

people upon that Iland . . . the mayne Ilana, with all the broken Ilandes adjacent . . . made in the form of a half Moone, but a little more rounder. Other noteworthy events occurred: *there was borne upon the Bermudas, . . . two children, the one a man child, there baptised by the name of Bermudas: and a woman child, baptised by the name of Bermuda.* In quite another category came the worthwhile toil of all the men of the company. They were forced to make lime there of a hard kind of stone, and to make salt, for all the salt was spent and spoyled before the remnants of *The Sea-Venture's* stores could be recovered. This salt was greatly prized for it was used in salting some stores of hogs flesh for provision when the company eventually shipped for Virginia.

The harbours of the islands were carefully examined by Jourdain with Captain Newport and others. There were many good ones but *there was one especiall place to goe in, on the South-East, or rather to go out from, which was not altogether free from some danger . . . with three fathoms water at the entrance thereof, but within-side, seaven or eight fathoms at the least, where boats could safely be land-locked from the danger of all winds and weathers.* Its military possibilities were very obvious. It was plain that with but small store of munition it could be fortified and easily defended . . . *against the Potentest King of Europe.*

When all was ready, *the winde comming faire*, two small boats set off from this harbour to journey to the mainland, more than two hundred leagues distant. Very difficult had been the building of the ship and pinnis, the one called the *Deliverance*, the pinnis the *Patience*, in which the travellers were to voyage to Virginia. The lack of tarre and pitch for these two vessels, had compelled the use of the primitive lime the men had manufactured on the island, mixed with some wax found cast up by the Sea, from some shipwracke. This mixture Sir George Somers used to pay the seams of the pinnis, which he built entirely himself. Yet he was of threescore yeares of age at the least, when he constructed this small barge of thirty tonne or thereabout. On it he had laboured from morning untill night as duellie as any workeman doth labour for wages, and built her all with Cedar, with little or no yron worke at all, having in her but one boulte which was in the kilson.

It was the tenth day of March in the year 1610 when the two boats left the Bermudas, and they arrived at James towne in

Virginia, the foure and twentieth day of the same Moneth, where they found some threescore persons living. Stores at Jamestown were very low, so it was decided that as there was not above fourteen dayes victaile the whole company should direct their course for new-found-land, there to refresh themselves and get new supplies. But it pleased God to dispose otherwise and to give better meanes. For being all shipped in four pinnices, and departed from the towne almost downe half the River they met Lord de la Warre, comming up with three ships well furnished with victaile, which revived all the company, and gave them great content.

After a few days de la Warre understanding of the great plenty of hogges and fish was at the Bermudas, and the necessity of them in Virginia, was desirous of sending thither for supplies for the better comforting of the men, and the plantation of the Country. Whereupon Sir George Sommers, being a man best acquainted with the place, and being willing to doe service unto his Prince and Country: without any respect of his own private gaine...out of his worthy and valiant minde, offered himselfe to undertake to performe with Gods help that dangerous voyage.

Lord de la Warre very willingly and thankfully accepted the offer, so on the nineteenth of June, Sir George Somers with some chosen companions set out again for the Bermudas. About the same time a ship left Virginia with a number of other persons, including Silvester Jourdain, and eventually reached London in the late September of 1610. 'In response to the demand of the public for details several accounts of the shipwreck were at once published. It cannot be doubted that Shakespeare secured a copy of the first narrative to be printed, *A Discovery of the Barmudas*, by Jourdain.¹ He read also, we may suppose, two further accounts² which appeared later, for all this concerned William Herbert and Henry Wriothesley so closely that it was bound to affect Shakespeare too. Out of the story grew his idea for a new play with its topically apt title, *The Tempest*, containing echoes, which come to mind almost unbidden, of the events played out on the Bermudas.

¹ Joseph Quincy Adams.

² One by Richard Rich the other by William Strachey both of *The Sea-Venture*.

So Silvester Jourdain influenced Shakespeare. He influenced
Marvell too, as we see in

Where the remote Bermudas ride
In the ocean's bosom unespied
From a small boat that rode along
The listening winds received this song:

where the song tells of God sending

the fowls to us in care
On daily visits through the air

and of how

With cedars, chosen by His hand
From Lebanon He stores the land;
And makes the hollow seas that roar
Proclaim the ambergris on shore.

Yet of Jourdain himself we have but the slightest knowledge. We know that he was the son of William Jourdain of Lyme Regis, and that he had a brother Ignatius, who was a wealthy merchant in Exeter. The famous John Jourdain, trusted navigator of the East India Company was his cousin. We know too that even in the late years of Elizabeth's reign Silvester was busy shipping goods from Poole to other seaports of Southern England. 'After his return from America his life becomes obscure; we know only that in 1650 he died, unmarried, in the parish of St. Sepulchre beyond Newgate, London.'¹

Yet as we look back his obscurity vanishes. He lives again in his graphic story *A Discovery of the Barmudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels*. And someone else lives again in the story too: Sir George Somers, who, like Jourdain, was born at Lyme Regis, and who spent most of his lifetime there. There is no doubt that Silvester admired Somers wholeheartedly, so that we can still see the old admiral clearly, an outstanding example of one *willing to do service unto his Country, who out of his worthy and valiant mind . . . laboured from morning till night, as duellie as any workeman doth labour for wages*.

¹ Joseph Quincy Adams.

A DISCOVERY OF THE BARMUDAS

When Jourdain wrote his pamphlet, safe at home in England once more, his thoughts still turned to Sir George Somers, the outcome of whose second journey to *the Divels Ilse* was still unknown to him. No wonder we find him ending his story with a prayer: *and so I trust God will protect him and send him well backe againe, to his hearts desire . . .*

Note.—All italicized excerpts are from *A Discovery of the Barmudas, otherwise called the Ile of Dwels*, Silvester Jourdain. Printed by John Windet, 1610.

Alternative spellings of Bermudas:

Duchess of Malfi, Webster, iii, 2, the Bermoothas.

The Devil's Law-case, Webster, iii, 2, Barmotho pigs.

Women Pleased, Fletcher, i, 2, the Barmoothes.

AN INTRODUCTION TO MODERN GREEK POETRY

KENNETH YOUNG

FOR some years, Greece has occupied a foremost place in the newspapers and in political discussions and international wranglings. It is not, of course, for the first time in her short history as a national state—she was a counter in the game of international politics for at least a quarter of the nineteenth century. But at that time, interest in her politics extended also to her arts, her language, her music and poetry. It is a measure of European decivilization that scarcely any work on Greek art or literature has been produced as a result of her present political prominence.

There are many reasons for this neglect. Modern Greece has always been overshadowed by Classical Greece—or rather she has never been seen in perspective. Too many scholars have been incapable of fitting the modern Greek into their self-erected Classical Ivory Tower. Too many still mutely cling to the now exploded nineteenth-century theory of the German, Fallmerayer, to the effect that the modern Greeks are really Slavs, and comparatively late usurpers of the land of the extinct Greeks. Many others forgetting the Greek epic of 1940-41, have reverted to Mr. T. S. Eliot's delightful but slanderous view of the modern Greek:

Under the brown fog of a winter noon,
Mr. Eugenides, the Smyrna merchant,
Unshaven with a pocketful of currants,
G.i.f. London. . .

Yet, in spite of possible disagreement from ethnologists, modern Greece is everywhere redolent of the Greece of 3,000 years ago—as a man's personality hangs about his study long after he has left it. In the most unexpected places and circumstances, the traveller hears echoes from the past. The blood of

the Greeks may be mixed, but topography, climate, and history have made the modern Greek, in effect, a true descendant of the men of the Homeric, Republican, and Hellenistic periods. It has often been justly observed that the Modern Greek language differs far less from Homeric Greek than, for example, does Modern English from the English of Chaucer. The history of Greece and the feeling of being a Hellene did not end with the fall of the Macedonian Empire: it continued in unbroken tradition through the Byzantine epoch, under Frankish, Venetian, and Turkish supremacy, in Alexandria, Bucharest, and Asia Minor, to its re-emergence into political freedom in 1821.

From at least late Byzantine times, the Greek spirit lived unique and unabsorbed largely because of its poetry. This is not the windy apothegm that a nation lives by its poetry, or dies for lack of it. It was the fact that Greek folk poetry and song, handed down in the family circle, behind closed doors or in mountain fastnesses, preserved the Greek language, and by the content of the poetry and the virtues it underlined, the Greek spirit, when both were in grave danger of final submersion beneath the weight of the all-pervasive, stiflingly sweet luxuriousness of the Moslemized Ottoman empire. There were no Greek schools, the language was proscribed, there were no books: poetry preserved Hellenism, and played no small part in inspiring the Greek guerillas on the mountains, who were (after centuries) to throw out the hated conqueror from the Greek mainland.

Much of this poetry has been collected and printed in recent years: it is folk-poetry of exciting scope and quality, ranging from the heroic ballad to the nursery lullaby. But it is folk poetry of a very special interest because it is still alive and is still being produced.

'Folk poetry' or 'folk' anything, has an unpleasant effect on the normal English reader, nauseated by the galumphing of bob-haired spinsters round self-conscious maypoles, and bored by the infantile piping of pseudo-rude pipe-bands. But in fact the poetry of the Greeks to-day is this folk-poetry. As the French critic, Yéméniz, has well put it: 'Le plus grand poète de la Grèce contemporaine, c'est le peuple Grec lui-

même: avec cet innombrable essaim de rapsodes qu'il engendre sans cesse...'

In the same way as the British tin-pan alley turns out a constant stream of American jazz, so the Greek equivalent produces words and music in the genuine Greek folk-tradition. And in the long history of this tradition, one of the outstanding names is Homer—whether he was a professional from the contemporary tin-pan alley, or an amateur.

The fact that folk poetry in Greece is living—and popular as much in smart Kolonaki in Athens as in the rudest shepherd hut on the Epirus mountains—makes its comprehension by Western Europeans rather difficult. For poetry in this sense died many years ago in Western Europe, to be replaced by the novel, the film, the football match—or by nothing. The significance of this decay cannot be pursued here: we can observe only that there has been no such decay in Greece, and almost all living and historical Greece is enshrined in the thousand-year-old development of this folk poetry.

As mainland Hellenism gave way to cosmopolitan Hellenism known as Byzantinism, a general decline in poetry—though not in art or architecture—can be observed. That is to say, the poetry of the study or the cloister declined—a few Cretan canones and some Orthodox hymns (a selection of which appear in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*) are the sole survivals. But folk poetry (or 'popular romance' as some historians call it) was alive; and it is best exemplified by the tenth century ten book epic telling of the career of a Greek warrior-hero of the Byzantine Empire, *Diyennis Akritas*. *Diyennis* was a type of the soldiers who were stationed on the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire to defend civilization against the Saracens, and the Slav-Mongol nomads (the 'Appelats'). The epic cycle, the *Akritikon Kyklon*, is in fact a *chanson de geste*; it is less dramatic than the *Chanson de Roland*, but far more brilliant in its descriptions and the profundity and delicacy of its psychology. It is on the whole the greater work, in the opinion of many critics, for it symbolises the aspirations of the Greek people in its struggle against invaders from the east, which was also the struggle between the Christian religion and the decivilizing Moslemism, between civilization and barbarism.

These poems spring from the Homeric tradition: but they are not in any sense imitations of Homer of which the first ten centuries A.D. are full. And—Diyennis Akritas is better known to the modern Greek than the poems of Chaucer to the modern Englishman.

After this tenth-century flowering, Greek poetry is submerged, because the people itself was submerged beneath the alien and repressive yoke of the Mussulman Turk. Diyennis, in fact, failed—and that is perhaps why most of the extant poems about him deal with his death in battle. But the qualities of Diyennis—his refusal to admit defeat (he even fights with Death himself before he is finally overcome), his intense and clear eyed realism, his occasional pawky humour—have lived on in the Greeks: British officers who were with the partisans in the late war knew Diyennis very well.

But it is in the period following Diyennis' failure—very roughly from the fourteenth to the eighteenth centuries, that this Homeric folk tradition is strengthened and filled with the high qualities of fighting patriotism. New subjects appear. The Kleftic songs are a continuation of the Akritic tradition, but their subject matter is now the struggle of the Greek guerillas (or 'Klefts') against the occupying Turk. These songs are strong and warlike, but also simple and full of observations of nature. As the ice-clear streams tumble down the slopes of Olympus, the Kleft who has his hiding places there makes myths from the natural things around him, and these poems are full of birds who sing with human voices, of Mount Olympus chiding Mount Kissavos, of streams and bridges with their malevolent familiars and noonday ghosts who lure humans to their doom.

The 'Idiotika' ('private' songs) include cradle songs, working songs, festival songs and the songs of love. These are probably the oldest of all the Greek poetry still extant, and they stem directly from classical times: Greek mothers still croon a cradle song with words almost identical with the ones Euripides gave to Elektra to lull her brother Orestes to sleep. The songs of the grape and the corn harvests, of the girls at their hand-loom, of the bread baking are in the rhythm set by the nature of the work itself, while the mourning-songs—

connected particularly with the village of Maina in the Peloponnese and the street songs the children still sing at New Year, are still as alive as ever. Some are quite clearly pre-Christian or only semi-Christianized.

A sense of melancholy abides in much of this folk-poetry, but it is not merely the melancholy of an oppressed people; it derives rather from the observation that nature is eternal and man is not. It is a sentiment of permanent poignancy; it has no more fitting or noble expression than in these poems made by unlettered bards and mountain irregulars. The poems are as varied as the Greek coastline itself; some are humorous, others are genuine threnodies, and others are full of that nostalgia which affects so powerfully all Greeks who are abroad—the nostalgia that makes them work like slaves in America for twenty-five years in order to buy a house in their native village in Greece: a house which they well know may be destroyed by those permanent features of the Greek landscape, the partisans.

To the foreign reader without special knowledge of or interest in Greece, these poems can represent a new widening of the poetic landscape, but much depends on the translation. For much of their felicity lies in a certain virile quaintness in use of language; and many of them are in dialect, which has placed translators from the Greek in a quandary ever since the first attempt on the *Lysistrata*.

I have dealt at length with the folk poetry because it is part of a living, growing tradition; it satisfies a large part of that unquenchable thirst and need for poetry that the Greek shares with all his forebears.

But with the liberation of Greece and its rebirth as a sovereign nation, new needs appear. Education and the emergence of a Western European type class society brought entirely new situations in Greece—an urban population tending to be cut off from the peasantry, a feeling of nationhood, subtler emotions, and appetencies. And so a new type of poetry—a written poetry as opposed to a spoken or sung poetry—appears: the type of poetry that, in Italy, England, and France—had begun in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the Western European Renaissance.

This poetry of the study, of the solitary reader and the printed page, was new in Europe in the twelfth century; but ancient Greece had had this type of poetry in high development alongside the sung poetry already mentioned. The two traditions—the troubadour and the written—had not continued this parallel development. The troubadour tradition was handed down undiluted and little affected by centuries and circumstances; the written poetry of ancient Greece had had no direct descendants, the tradition was dispersed, partitioned out among the eclectic nations, and the written poetry of modern Greece begins in the nineteenth century. It no longer had any connection with the written poetry of classical Greece, save that in the beginning it was written on French and Italian early nineteenth-century models which in turn were the romantic reaction to French neo-classical poetry, derived from the humanistic Renaissance's muddled half-knowledge of Greek via Latin. It was the Akropolis, or the shores of Mytilene, seen through smoked and cracked Italian sun glasses. Yet its diluted neo-classicism reflected truly one side of the Greek character, just as the folk poetry reflects another. Indeed, a French historian, Jardé, has seen these two elements—the neo-classical and the Byzantine—as the two permanently warring elements of the Greek soul, the two incompatibles which account for much of the friction visible in Greek life.

The poets who started this Renaissance were often Greek by nationality only. Most of them lived in the Ionian islands—Zakinthos, Keffalonia, or Corfu, which had never been occupied by the Turks. This is important, for the basic characteristics of the modern Greeks were undoubtedly produced as reactions called forth by the Turkish occupation. These poets had little conception of a native Greek culture, and no idea of the folk poetry; in fact, most of them wrote in Italian and thought in a West European way. (Perhaps these poets eventually realized that they were out of touch with some of the bases of Greek life—one of them, Pallis, attempted to put the *Iliad* into kleftic verse and imagery!)

Three of these poets—Solomos, Palamas, and Kalvos—are, however, remarkable largely because of their individual talent

rather than their Hellenism. They write about Greece and her struggle rather as foreign Philhellenes might—with enthusiasm and feeling, but one feels that their feet, physically and intellectually, are most firmly planted outside the Greek tradition. A famous French bon mot says, 'Philhellenism is a malady caught in Europe which can be cured only in Greece'—and one feels that such a cure would have immeasurably deepened the poetry of the Greek nineteenth century. Dionysus Solomos—who is by way of being the national poet of Greece—is a poet of sufficiently wide interest to have had a book in English devoted to him.¹ Although he wrote the words of the 'Hymn to Freedom'—the Greek national anthem—he began his writing career in Italian. Yet some of his later work has a freshness and depth which still compels attention. In the *Free Besieged*, a long allegorical poem dealing with the battle of Missolonghi where Byron lost his life, as foreground, Solomos dealt with one of the essential questions of life—freedom in spite of necessity. The poem, although written in the late nineteenth century, has a contemporary air.

His contemporary, Palamas, in a long poem sequence called *Immovable Life*, produced a curious blend of satire and lyrical pessimism. But though he was hailed by the French critic, Eugène Clement, as 'above all poets of contemporary Europe', his poetry to-day seems to lack a key, and there is throughout a feeling of deracination: his verse is like those splendid deluxe hotels which are identical in Helsinki, Budapest, or Athens. Furthermore, much of his energy was given to the still-unresolved struggle between the exponents of the traditional Greek language ('katherevousa') and those of a more modernized speech and writing ('demotiki'). To-day there is a third contestant—a language based on contemporary speech but going to the ancient roots for any new formations required. (This is opposed to the 'Demotikists', who draw on other languages—mainly French and Italian—for new words.)

Another *déraciné* poet was Kalvos, born in the still Italianate Greek island of Zakynthos. He was brought up in Italy and lived latterly in England, where two successive wives were English. He became a poet because he was fired

¹ "Dionysus Solomos." Romilly Jenkins, London, 1940.

by his country's struggle for freedom; he used mainly the ode form. There is something of Rilke in this poet's vision, which is strong and masculine, yet with a tender feeling towards the weaker in spirit.

Kavafis, probably the best known of all modern Greek poets, was born in Alexandria in 1864. Like the three just mentioned he, too, was a *déraciné*—he never lived in Greece. But the places he lived—Alexandria, Constantinople, Smyrna—were more essentially Greek than the Ionian islands had ever been. Homer after all came from Asia Minor. And the glories and fascination of the East Roman Empire were part of the muscle and blood of Kavafis. His poetry is 'curious', in the eighteenth century sense, with the musty oddities and sense of glory that still hangs about Byzantium. But it is as an introspective poet of contemporary, though not journalistic, themes that he has attracted western readers: E. M. Forster's Essay in *Pharos and Pharillon*, and John Mavrogordato's translations are evidence of this attraction. He is subtle, sophisticated, a pessimist full of irony, and the *tedium vite*: he is too, the poet of homosexual love, of middle-aged trivial lust. It was clearly hard work for him to bring his poems to birth; but their very tormented awareness makes them unique in Greek poetry.

The outstanding poet now writing, and the link between the four nineteenth-century poets already mentioned, is Angelos Sikelianos. Sikelianos is already sixty years old, and like many of the poets who were writing when he was young, he has a fondness for long poems—odes and elegies: his earlier poetry includes such things as the *Prologue to Life*, *The Easter of the Greeks*, and *Dedalus*. He shared with Palamas and others a rather windy Shelleyism. But he produced a surprise of importance during the occupation with his five linked poems, *Akritika*. These are fine poems reaching back for their form and their tone to the folk poems of the Greek soldiers guarding the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire, which we have already noted; but on these foundations building authentic and contemporary edifices of great value. In the opinion of many critics, these are the finest poems to have come out of the war; and if Greek had been a more widely known language would

deservedly have received more praise than Aragon's *Crève Cœur*, with which they have been compared.

Much verse came out of the Greek Resistance Movement—but only one genuine poet, Vassili Rotas, who was a poet before the war, though a minor one. He became in a sense the poet of the Resistance, and in the brief period of E.A.M. rule he wrote and dramatically spoke many poems written for special occasions. Some British soldiers may remember with what amazing effect—perceptible even by those who did not know the language—he recited one of his poems at a mass Memorial Service for the dead of the Resistance, held in Verria, Macedonia, in October, 1944. 'Tread softly on this hallowed ground; there are vibrant souls beneath it.'

Of the younger poets, George Seferis has been much praised and his poems have been translated into French and English (by himself). His poetry has a certain lyrical distinction at its best, but it is probably his work as a translator of Eliot into Greek which has been the more important. Eliot's early, very personal rhythms, indeed, appear all too frequently and with detrimental effect in Seferis' own work; and more recently Seferis has spoiled his quite genuine literary gifts by whoring after the latest west European rhythmic irregularities which fit with little aptness into the Greek natural scene which floods his work.

The influence of Eliot has, however, meant for the Greeks the beginning of their freedom from the overweening influence of literary France, and to a lesser extent Italy and Germany. It is not only political events that have brought about this preponderating Anglo-Saxon influence on the modern Greek arts; it is rather that Anglo-Saxon art has become more European, less mistily northern than formerly, more precise and classical. In parenthesis, it is interesting to note that the well known Greek critic of manners and literature, J. Apostolakis, who died recently, began his career with a biography of Thomas Carlyle. To-day, we have allowed our political prejudices to interfere with our literary comprehension in Carlyle's case—but in any case, Apostolakis showed none of Carlyle's tendencies to heroes and hero worship. What he did have, however, were Carlyle's will for perfection and his

sanely sarcastic attitude to some contemporary values—and both qualities are profoundly Greek.

One of the finest Greek poems of this generation is Elie Papadimitriou's *Anatolia*, which deals with the Greek disaster in Asia Minor in 1922, when the Greeks encouraged by the French and Lloyd George, pursued by force of arms the dream of a new Greco-Byzantine Empire. It is a tragic theme—this attempt to capture a dream by the squalid force of modern war, this leading up the garden of a small, proud, and courageous nation by powerful and faithless allies. But Miss Papadimitriou heightens the natural tragedy of the theme by an unheroic, yet poignant and unforgettable treatment.

Two Cretans are outstanding among the younger poets—these are Odysseus Elytis and Pantelis Prevelakis, of whose works we have had translated examples. Elytis' poems are full of life, merriment, and an early Blakeian delight in the world; they are splendid and vivid with the colour of Greece, the country and the people; and from *Orientations* (1939) and *Sun the First* (1943), Elytis is seen as a poet of an already half-fulfilled promise. Prevelakis has published a collection of poems called the *Naked Poetry* in which Spain (which he knows well) is curiously interwoven with his native Crete; and indeed the two have many and surprising similarities—even to the sound of the spoken language—perhaps due to a parallel infusion of Arab blood. Crete has a long almost incredibly varied artistic history—from the splendours of early and middle Minoan pottery, the canvases of Theotokopoulos (or El Greco), its medieval drama and the long romantic poem *Erotokritikos* which exists in an English translation.

There are, indeed, many new voices in Greece to-day, though few have yet attained an individual note; yet their poetry as a whole is fresh and it is Greek.

Its faults are still largely a reflection of the situation of the poets themselves; the continued strain of nostalgia for village life (which hardly one would seriously consider as a real life habitation); and a tendency to make their poems sound sonorous at all costs and to end them with a two line peroration, as if to clinch the matter once and for all. To end, in fact, with a bang not a whimper.

But energy abounds; new periodicals dealing with poetry and literature are flourishing, and the most tastefully produced post-war literary and artistic magazine I know in Europe is the Greek 'Aionas'. The Greek alphabet and language will, perhaps, always be a bar against the general appreciation of Greek poetry; I hope this introduction and the translations that follow may give some idea of the freshness and divine clarity which lie behind that bar.

SOME MODERN GREEK POEMS

(NOTE—The first seven poems are traditional.—EDITOR.)

OLD DEMOS

To-day, my Demo, Easterday, to-day is a holy day,
The valiant ones are happy and they practise at the targets,
And you, my Demo, you in Iannina at the Vizier's gate,
Bound in chains, on the flogging block, in the deserted cell.
And all the people, both Turks and Greeks, are saying:
'Our dear Demo, be careful and keep your arms.'
And Demo cries:
'Let God and the Virgin Mary help, and the Lord St. George,
My hand to strengthen, and to gird my sabre.
When will come the Spring and when the Summer,
When will the branches blossom, and the brushwood thicken?
So I may take my rifle, gird on my sabre,
And skulk beneath the mountains, near the hill-tops
And roast the sterile lambs, and the fat rams.
And make the mothers childless, leave the brides without
husbands.

ELENE BOTSARIS

All the womenleaders, the black-eyed ones,
All were enslaved, and they took them slaves,
But this ELENE BOTSARIS, this black-eyed one,
Was not enslaved, they didn't take her captive.
Five Turks are hunting her and five Janissaries.
Turns ELENE and says to them, turns and tells them,
My Turkish ones, don't waste your time, don't tire,
I am ELENE BOTSARIS, I am the sister of Markos,
I have the wonder rifle, the silver rifle,
And alive I will never be taken to the Turkish haunts.

SOME MODERN GREEK POEMS

ANDRIKO'S MOTHER

Andriko's mother lamented, Andriko's mother wept,
Towards the mountains often turned, with the mountains
argued:
'Agrafon wild mountain, Agrafon rocky peaks,
What did you with my son, Andriko the Capetanos?
Where is he and why comes he not this summer?
In Aspros they've not heard of him, nor yet in Karpenissi.
Curse you, old ones and you Black George,
You finished off my son, the first of the heroes.
Rivers, turn and swiftly break your banks,
And open a road for Andriko to come to Karpenission.'

IANNI CHILIKIOTIS

Weep the trees, weep, weep the branches
And weep the hiding places where I lay,
Weep the paths by which I passed,
Weep the springs of ice-cold water,
Weep the homesteads where I found bread,
Weep the monasteries where I got me wine.

From THE GHOST

All amidst the walnut trees, among the roots of the walnut
trees and among the olives,
Suddenly appeared a phantom and ate up the brave ones,
He ate them, he ate them all and didn't leave a one . . .

THE PARTISAN

I got up very early, black with sleep,
I took water to wash my face, water and shook off sleep.
I heard the pine trees how they thundered, and the beech
trees how they creaked,
What can be that big noise, that great one?
The heroes passed by and went to fight,
And went to fight the dog, the Mousaga.
The bush, the thunder, rocks and the hero.

OLYMPUS AND KISSAVOS

Olympus and Kissavos, the two mountains, are quarrelling,
 The two mountains were quarrelling,
 The two mountains are quarrelling. '

Old Olympus turns on Kissavos and says,
 Don't scold me, Kissavos, you
 Whom the Turks have trod upon.
 I, I am the old Olympus, in all the world renowned,
 With my forty-two tops and my sixty-two spring sources.
 To every fountain, every bush and every branch a Klefti.
 And on my top and on my top, a golden eagle is sitting,
 He is holding in his claws a hero's head.
 'My dear deformed head, head of a hero,
 How came you in my claws?'
 'My bird, since you ask, I will tell you.
 Forty Kelftis were we, forty braves,
 We took oath on the Holy Bible,
 If anyone fell sick, all would carry him away.
 Time came that I was ill, and they
 Left me in the gorges.'

From 'CRETE'

I gazed, and the seashore was yet afar;
 O, good thunderbolt of mine, come once more!
 Three thunderbolts fell, one atop the other,
 Very near the maiden with great thunderings.
 The seas and the sky in the lightning flash resounded,
 The seacoasts and the mountains with their many voices . . .
 And still the thunder rolled . . .
 And the sea that leaped in boiling bubbles
 Was calmed and all was calm and cleansed
 Fragrant as a garden and the sea received the stars.
 Some secret force held nature in a vice,
 To dress her beauties, to leave her anger.
 The breathless sky and the sea that whispers
 Less than a bee seeking honey in a flower,
 And the omnipresent moon trembles in the waters.
 A moon-clad girl embraces me and is happy.

SOME MODERN GREEK POEMS

TEMPTATION

Blond April dances with the God of Love,
And nature tastes the sweetness of her hours,
And in the cooling shades her buds peep forth,
Faint warblings from the fragrance.
Waters clear and sweet, the joyful brooks,
Tumbling into the musky odour of the abyss,
And the waters fill with fragrance, and the abyss with the
waters' freshness,
And all beneath the sun receive the richness of her springs,
Rushing, splashing, sounding like the nightingale,
And life springs forth from sky, and earth and sea.
But the water of the lake, unmoving, clear,
As far as eye can see unmoving, crystal clear to the very bed.
A tiny, unknown shadow, the butterfly plays
In the tiger lily and dreamily alights.
Fey light-shadowed one, tell us what you saw to-night,
A night full of miracles, a night sowed with magic!
No sigh, or sound in earth or sky or sea,
Less than a bee who hovers round a flower,
Where the lake is calmest, clearest,
And only the round moon mingles;
And clad in a silver light comes a beautiful maiden.

DIONYSOS SOLOMOS

TO THE MUSES

Where tremble illimitable
The lights of the night,
There on high to increase
The galaxy and to spray
Drops of freshness.

TO THE SARACENS

Alas, alas,
When God sent
His ray of truth
And with it,
Gave life to your bodies.

OCEAN

This land, the care of the gods,
Hellas of heroes the mother,
Sweet, friendly country, of mine,
The night of slavery covered you,
Night of æons.

A. KALVOS (1928)

ALMOND TREE

She shook the flowering almond tree
With her little hands
And covered with flowers her shoulders, arms,
And her hair.

Oh, snowy white I saw her, my mad one,
Sweet I kissed her,
I brushed from her head the flowers,
And thus I spoke to her:

'Mad one, why do you haste to wear
Snow on your hair?
Unwelcome, soon, comes heavy winter—
Don't you ponder?

Too late you will remember
These old jests,
Little old woman with snow-white hair
And spectacles!'

G. DROSINIS (1880)

THE SONG OF THE VINTAGE

The blackbird sings in the cool courtyard,
And partridges on the slopes,
The nightingales sing on the river banks,
And the girls in the hot vineyards,
They sing with a thousand smiles,
And so sings Golfo the beautiful,
Sings in her soft voice:

SOME MODERN GREEK POEMS

Vineyard mine, well pruned, smooth leaved,
Bind the red grapes for me to gather,
To make eternal wine
Of finest bouquet.
In deepest vault, like rare perfume,
I'll hide it, and whole years will keep it,

Until a Spring will come, until a Summer,
When comes from distant exile my beloved.
And I'll run to the courtyard, seize the bridle
Of his dusty horse, and in my arms will take him,
Kiss him on the eyes and on the mouth,
And offer, vineyard mine, of your eternal wine,
To wash away and banish
The cares of exile.

K. KRYSTALLIS (1891)

LULLABY

A mother makes bye byes
To her little baby,
And near her a beau,
Is wasting—his time.

'Sleep, don't shame me,
My secret pride to see;
Sleep, so I make you
A brother baby.'

SOURIS (1892)

SONG TO A LOST LOVE

A pale sun you appeared
Dispersed the misty dawn,
Amongst the vaporous clouds
Where your dear body went.

Your wings you fluttered,
White wings lightly stirred,
As if to dispel a dream,
And then over them sweetly

Shook your blond hair;
But from your closing eyes,
Before the wind arose,
Fell the first dew; '

And as the clouds thick
Lost you in final silence,
Rising, wingèd,
Darted the first lightning.

A. SIKELIANOS (1928)

MARIGO

Our maid Marigo
Isn't a good worker.
She forgets our kitchen
And thinks of her village.

Brings the water on her shoulder,
But she thinks again:
'Who is rocking our Drakoula?'
Lets the water fall.

'Has the goose a gosling?
Is it grey or yellow?
This month is the harvest:
And grandma will miss me.'

Her hands are here,
Her mind is there,
Drops and breaks the kitchen ware,
Marigoula, Marigo.

'How's the white hen?
And old grunter?
P'raps grandpa is dying, O!
Marigoula, Marigo!

SOME MODERN GREEK POEMS

'Why, your eyes are misty,
Why do you sob so?
And another plate in pieces,
Marigoula, Marigo!

Take your Sunday finery,
Put on your leather shoes,
Off to the village with you,
Marigoula, Marigo!

Z. PAPANTONIOU (1920)

SINNER

'He made man after his own image.'
In Smyrna, Melpomene,
Hero in Saloniki,
And once in Volo was Katinitsa;
Now in Vourla they call me Lela.
Which was my country? Who my people?
Curse me, if I know.
Home and native land, I have the brothels.
And my bitter years of childhood—
Misty, washed out pictures,
And my memories an empty chest.
To-day is worse than yesterday,
To-morrow no different from to-day.
Kisses from unknown mouths, curses,
And flics who push me here and there.
Parties, quarrels, until the dawn,
Diseases, the Singrou hospital,
And injection 606.
Floating plank in a sinking boat,
All my life is waste.
But from my hell, I tell you:
I am your image, Society, and I am like you!

GALATEA KAZANTZAKIS (1931)

REFUSAL

On the secret seashore
White like a young pigeon
We thirsted at noon
But the water was brackish.

Upon the blonde sand
I wrote her name;
Daintily blew the sea breeze
And wiped out the writing.

With what heart, what breath,
What desire, with what reverses
We made our life's mistake.
And changed our life.

GEORGE SEFERIS

LETHE

Fortunate the dead who forgot
The bitterness of life. When the sun
Sets and twilight follows,
Don't weep for them, though so deep your grief.

At such an hour, the thirsting souls wend their way
To the crystal fountain of oblivion;
But if you let fall a tear for those you loved
The water will be muddied.

And if they drink the clouded water again they remember,
Crossing the meadows of the asphodels,
Old pains that sleep within their hearts.

If you must weep when twilight comes,
Let your eyes drop tears for the living:
They wish to forget—but cannot.

L. MAVILIS (1915)

SOME MODERN GREEK POEMS

WAITING FOR THE BARBARIANS

What do we await in the municipal square, assembled all together?

It is the barbarians who are coming to-day.

Why in the Assembly is there such inaction;

Why do they sit, the elders, and they make no laws?

Because the barbarians will come to-day;

What more laws can they make, the elders?

The barbarians, when they come, they will make the laws.

Why did our Emperor arise in the early dawn,

And sit at the great gate of the town,

High on the throne, ceremoniously, and the Crown upon him?

Because the barbarians will come to-day,

And the Emperor waits to receive

Their chief. For certain he makes ready

To give him a parchment. There

He writes for him many names and titles.

Why do our two Consuls and the Prætors appear

To-day with their scarlet and brodered vestments?

Why do they wear their bracelets with the many amethysts,

And their rings with the splendid, shining emeralds.

Because the barbarians will come to-day

And such things dazzle the barbarians.

Why then our orators come not as customarily,

To put forth their words, to make their speeches?

Because the barbarians will come to-day,

And they are bored with eloquence and public speeches.

But why of a sudden this restlessness,

This troubled stirring? (How grave became the faces!)

Why do they empty so quickly, the streets, the piazzas,

And why do they turn to their houses so deep in thought?

Because day darkens and the barbarians came not,

And someone came from the frontiers

And said that the barbarians were there no more.

And now what shall we do without barbarians?

Those men were a sure solution.

KOSTAS KAVAFIS

(Translated by Elizabeth Constantinou and Kenneth Young.)

ANGER AND PITY

DENIS BOTTERILL

(*This article concludes the author's review of some recently published books of contemporary poetry, the first part of which appeared in the December number.*)

Herbert Corby. *Time in a Blue Prison*. Fortune Press. 7s. 6d.

Alan Ross. *The Derelict Day*. John Lehmann. 5s.

Robin Atthill. *If Pity Departs*. Andrew Dakers. 5s.

'WHERE are our War Poets?'

How sick I grew of that journalist-cry in the cheap press—and even in papers which should have known better; for I knew where they were—and where they had been.

The older poets—they are still young in years—had been writing about the 1939-45 conflict in the early thirties. Some had made important gestures of defiance and fought against Franco, journeyed to Manchuria, written in angry warning against the onrush of the juggernaut. Others, like John Cornford, gave their lives even before the stockbrokers realized that the heaven-sent chance of cashing-in-quick was really at hand.

Younger men—Sidney Keyes, T. R. Hodgson, Richard Spender, Alun Lewis, Stephen Haggard—were killed in action, or gave their lives serving the cumbersome machine which lived only to destroy that which it could not understand.

Others served and survived—and wrote about it. Not the clever journealese, perhaps, of ace-reporters grown bald and fat with high-living in safe Messes, but angry verse, contemplative, pitying—or sheer damned good poetry—like the young men I now write about.

I suppose very few people will ever read these books with serious intent. The War is over now—Long live the War! And we shall never be quit of the machine-made Fools in Office who flourish on War like vampires. War exists when the majority of mankind is tired of living. Already the Great-and-Flabby-Ones talk of how war 'Keyed you up', 'Incited you to effort', 'Brought out the best in One'. They are the ones who

ANGER AND PITY

profited—and cannot now pay their debts by living in the hard times of peace.

Herbert Corby suffered, not the ecstasy of trumpeted battle so much as the sheer waste of eager years.

The blue prison is the uniform of the Royal Air Force:

‘Prison had the boredom of a day
spent in the solitary cell of idleness, had
the horror in us of wishing our lives away:
friendless we hied to pubs in fours and fives,
heartsick, frustrated, acting to be glad,
our spirits in the mud, wishing away our lives.’

And again:

‘I have lived three years I did not like,
obedient to idiocy . . .’

and he has worse and truer things to say about the R.A.F. Of the officers’ wives he writes:

‘ . . . The war that made her man
pompous, saluted, promoted her in vain,
and though she shouts and laughs for all to hear,
she’d be more natural drawing up the beer.’

* * * * *

‘This is their effort in the total war,
to brag and think of self, and how they are
bothered by the frippery on a hat.
They are a race apart. Thank God for that!’

That is a fair sample of Herbert Corby angry. It is not good poetry, and it is not good verse. He allows himself too much space—should practice the discipline he would never be encouraged to practice in the Air Force—self-discipline; should read Byron, Butler, Dryden, Pope, and Belloc—and so learn how to point his barbs so venomously that the victim knows not the wound until the poison is in every vein.

Herbert Corby gives an accurate picture of an aspect of war as horrible as death and battle; he also gathers his not inconsiderable poetic strength into a short poem, *Ponies Down Pits* who

‘ . . . are lost and do not know the day
but wait and wait till death takes dark away.’

DENIS BOTTERILL

And he captures at times the echoing music of Walter de la Mare:

‘When you die, some goddess shall stir
into your grace, but ghostlier,
knowing that beauty, lovely-eyed,
grew soiled with living . . .’

Herbert Corby should remember, too, that more than a century ago William Cobbett wrote:

‘. . . I became Sergeant-Major to the regiment which brought me in close contact at every hour with the whole of the epaulet gentry, whose profound and surprising ignorance I discovered in a twinkling.’ and:

‘As I advanced in experience I felt less and less respect for those whom I was compelled to obey.’

When he is a poet Mr. Corby need obey nobody; until then he must submit himself to poetic discipline. If he is (as I suspect) a genuine poet, he will take little notice of unkindly reviewers . . . should take even less notice of the kindly ones.

Alan Ross experienced a different kind of war. His work is cold and fundamentally unemotional despite an overdosing of pity for all and sundry. Pity is the poet’s *Slough of Despond*:

‘And inside, the heart is indulgent and empty,
And nothing matters any more.’

That is the trouble. Nothing seems to matter any more, even when:

‘The evening spreads nets in the water.
Beneath the pines sand beaches burn
Silk at the river’s edge; a week end
Of your body dries in my evening heart.’

the reader is left cold, and uncertain whether to join the lament or sneer at its obvious artificiality. Mr. Ross’s images and symbols are mostly visual—which is all to the good—but he does not compel any strong emotional force to make them live:

‘September comes back under girders
of light, Victoria holds preciously
its own sky, the returned nostalgia
for yesterday and night trains
drawn up silently, platforms
bathed in blue huddles of light
shadowed with love and farewell.’

ANGER AND PITY

I fancy that Alan Ross, when he travelled to war, rode in a different carriage to that set apart for Herbert Corby and his fellow prisoners in the hated blue. He tries to overload his lines with more meaning than they can carry and achieves only *pastiche*. He has a greater technical mastery than Herbert Corby, but lacks poetic fire, and *The Derelict Day* leaves me with a feeling of waste endeavour.

Robin Atthill's *If Pity Departs* is a fine achievement. It has a unity seldom attained in a first book of poems. He has been allowed to develop in his own way and towards a spiritual synthesis. And if pity leaves Alan Ross emotionally empty and drives Herbert Corby to anger, it has a different significance to Robin Atthill:

'Pity is the sharp sword in our hearts
that torments our life with tenderness,
and wounds with love; but how much less
are we than men, if pity departs.'

There is a superficial similarity between the technique and subject-matter of Alan Ross and Robin Atthill, but it seems to me that the latter gets the deeper significance into lines charged with emotion and thought:

THE BURNT MOOR

The burnt moor's blacker than storm
where the ravenous flames devoured
the unvalued gold of gorse and foam
of may until the morning was charred.

Though the heather which blazed in the wind
was ragged and bleached with the spent years,
the wasted beauty burns blind
our sight with bitter smoking tears;
until the renaissance of tiny leaf
unfolds a green vista before
tired eyes that search for life
on the wilderness of the dark moor.

But when, O when upon the curlew hills
will the curled leaf break into the wild
splendour of spring beyond the walls
of death that close in our winter world?

DENIS BOTTERILL

His evocation of landscape is demonstrated again:

‘Curlew sees the dale deep—
gashed among the folding fells,
haze-hung and musical with steep
and stony waters.’

and from the quiet opening of *Imperfect Felicity*:

‘Lovely my cat, lying in elegant ease
before the vista’d caverns of frosty fire,
each contented limb sprawled in abandon
to the sleepy warmth—what Epicurean ecstasy
is this, godlike, watching the careless flames
that burn into the night and the sparks fly up?

Though in the spotlight of your master’s love
you hold the momentary stage, your scene’s no drama;
action is the secret, though Christ also suffered;
doing unlocks the doorway to the quiet mind.’

he draws a series of images which epitomise the struggle of the artist and craftsman (Indivisibly the ploughman, Michelangelo, the mountaineer, Beethoven) to achieve a synthesis. Because he is by nature a poet, Robin Atthill succeeds and identifies himself with them all.

TWO POEMS

A VIRTUAL IMAGE

by ALEX COMFORT

My cousin, my twin now, the mirror shadow
his feet set to an unattainable sky

walks where the orchards turning by our sides
open their ploughed lanes, wheeling as we move

he has seen the water fall, the drops shining,
the dipper stand beside the skein of pools

but with a clouded upward-looking eye
the buried eyes of someone underground

Our shoes fall silent, upon grass not stones,
his sole to mine, firm with his upward weight

The spring is many-faced, its waters running
where our perpetual walk flanks trees in order

or where the moon, upon an edge of hills
holds her knife shadow, like a ship's curved sail

alone and together, companions, foot to foot,
treading the earth's skin, keeping pace and pace

he under, I above; his journey windless
mine in the lake of air. We do not hail each other

and only pools and mirrors let us see,
he my white sunlight, I his darker place

our double footstep moves in my one voice.

POETRY
POEM

by ALEX COMFORT

A rider turned to stone
caught in mid-leap by time
even the hoof-sparks frozen to glittering dust

or a stone footprint where
scales and enormous claws
frighten the quarrymen even so long after

something blown from Northward
or between us and the sun
makes words fall frozen as we spit them out

all those dark glaciers
come down from history
the songs themselves tinkle like icicles

perhaps more durable,
transparent as the cage
which holds a mammoth, lifelike but not living

somehow preserved, we are
waiting the thaw, the axes,
to bring us out again, no hair destroyed

but in another time
when glaciers go back
and only leave round boulders on the fields

cold, cold; come closer, closer.

THE LINK

JOHN AUSTIN

WHAT, then, is the whole, if not the sum of the parts? There, at once, you have the crucial question; it arises, necessarily, from the first frankness. That such frankness must be your basic standpoint is undoubted; you must, indeed, admit of the secondhandedness of it all. No, there can be no claim to originality. Nevertheless, you are entitled to qualify, to stress that it is to the secondhandedness of the *parts* you are referring, and this differentiation of the parts from the whole can be termed as no mere quibble; it has something essential in it. You stand or fall by your firm assertion that the whole is something distinct; that yours parts company with repetition. Yet you must admit again that you are far from being at ease; always you are dogged by the fear that an innate vainness thus classifies the whole, that an inward twist maintains that of the mingling of the old, something new is born. If that could be so! Deep within, the belief endures that once in eternity there must be something new; something more than a mere subjective illusion of the braincells. But all the time the fear is there—the glare of idea-copulation is fierce, and if the cells have been scorched in that incandescence. . . . Illusion—you toy with the word, you take it as your touchstone. Very well! Your touchstone it is! Have a care though; it is only for you, that it can be any less real.

Anyway, consider the background. You have an ordinary English April day; ordinary, that is, in that April days are always extraordinary. The winter's torpor is at an end, it is the time of the year when you snatch at experience, life surges through you. Your psyche reaches out, you are rather less earthbound. You have too, at hand, the makings of that experience, although as yet, you are quite unaware of it. Unaware, that of two generations, you are the go-between; the relater of events separate in time. The relation is come by afterwards; the immediate strangeness lies in that the

experience was there all the time; at least, the makings of it. Until then, your world-lines had not crossed; that would explain your thought in terms of illusion only. Had you and the experience stood side by side at that crossroad of time it would have been different. But to revert to the point. You have then an April day, two generations yet to impinge upon you, and you yourself. Other incidentals there are, such as the two other passengers in the car, or the two other occupants of the dining table. But incidental only they are; except in so far as they were there they could hardly be said to have affected the situation at all. Hardly have affected . . . there could be one weak link in the chain. If one of them were playing a private game. . . ? A cynic perhaps, with a mind powerful in thought-projection; a cynic, noting with amusement the credulous belief of a mind newly awakened from winter sleep. No, no, no! They must have been incidental. You alone were common both to the carload and the dinner table, apart from the fact that in either case you were three in number, surely of no significance.

You are oblivious to the jolting in the back of the car; you sway from side to side, but the urge to peer between the driver and the passenger in front, for a glimpse of the speedometer, is lacking. You do not know that it is lacking; you do not even recognize that your whole attention is absorbed by the bright spring morning. You are in a sense nothing, in that you are at one with everything. You yourself stream past with the budding twigs of the hedges and the dewy grass of the verge. The still gaunt trunks of trees gaze back with you to the heyday of their zenith; you tremble with them at the impending onslaught of newborn leafage. The winding snake of a road has no hisses for you; the eternal snake in your breast wriggles with it lovingly. Though alone from the driver and your fellow passenger, you are not lonely; you do not speak to them, nor they to you, but your veins burn with the rising sap of the world. There is no speech, for there is no driver, no fellow passenger, no car; there is nothing, and therefore everything. . . .

. . . The face is blanched before the words come to the lips,

and the words come quickly. In that split second all faces are blanched, and all voices tremor in unison. There is bated breath. Not instantaneous, yet seemingly so; at least one whole swing of the arm wielding the axe of time, and the bated breath escapes the lips. A muted undertone to the rounded curses that hide the fear so near to the surface. The mossy trunks might well be at their zenith, the fields and hedges in the barren grip of winter. The world has shrunk to the narrow confines bounded by the car; in that second, too, it has shrunk to the age-old motive in every heart—self-protection just self-protection! But already the arm has swung again; true, the snake in the road and the snake in the breast will not mate again so deeply, something of the backward glance of the trunks will pallor the yearning of the hedgerows, there will be a car and a fellow passenger and a driver, but there will be restitution. Your reassurance will grow with your measurement of the driver; you will acknowledge his superbness. You will no longer be alone, you will gladly share his story, bathe in the light of his halo.

It was another driver and another time. Your driver, then, was a passenger—a carload just such as this. Just such a road as this, too, but the weather was sombre; the shivering countryside fixed your eyes on the road ahead. Your thoughts wrapped you round; rather, the bleakness all about crowded your mind on a single track, a track without breadth. Only length, length, length—length to the journey's end. You pondered the journey's end, you itched with the driver for it. But when the moment came you were unprepared; when length folded back at you, you could not reconcile yourself with the journey's end. Not a roadster swinging round the bend at you, this time; the high blank wall of a lorry looming up at you, concertinaing the road faster than you could count. A lorry facing the way you were going, parked straight ahead, and still the car kept on; if anything, the speed increased. You wanted to screech at the chap at the wheel, but the words stuck in your throat. Involuntarily, you shrank back in your seat; you felt the blood draining from your cheeks. All in that instant you made the calculation. You knew that the inside

wing of the car would fail to clear by just a foot. In that instant, too, every one of you slammed down his foot on the brake, and snatched at the wheel, but the wheel did not respond. Already the high back of the lorry was above you; length, speed, and the journey's end were sandwiched into one. The arbiter of life and death, one foot of clearance, had cheated you.

Afterwards, you could not be sure whether you *did* look back at the standing lorry; did look back, that was, in the brief instant when it would have been possible to be certain. Perhaps it was the feeling of numbness at the impossible, that had dulled your senses from seeking to confirm that impossible it was. Perhaps it was the continued speed of the car, and remember the curves of the road, just like this road, that would have blocked your view if look back you did. Too, when you had returned from the dead, there was your reaction to the driver; a wave of cursing recrimination that beat him down into a pulp of incomprehension. Well might he sink into a dull apathy, a dull rejection of culpability, even a lack of recognition that it had happened other than you had calculated it to happen. From that day to this he has never argued the point. *You* could not see how he could have swerved in time, but that he did swerve you knew. You could never have sworn it in a court of law; all you could say was that if he had not swerved there would have been no court of law. He was simply mute. You were your only judge that he did act when you were numbed with fear; indeed, you might argue that the recriminations were proof that he did so act. He was simply mute.

From then onwards your journey is mute, too. You see the trees and fields and hedges, and you are aware of the road swinging back under you, but within, you feel that something exists from that other moment in that other journey. You know that it will continue to exist and will oust the trees and fields and hedges from your mind, and you know that the road will exist only as that other road. You will measure the foot of destruction, you will argue that it is too late to swerve. You will be sure that you did look back, and that it was the

continued speed of the car that hid the lorry from view. But nothing will prevent the moment from existing and continuing to exist. The factory gates at the end of the journey cannot dispel your obsession, nor can your morning's work; always at the back of your mind it is there. Suffice it to say it is already dinnertime; you are alone in the canteen, though at the table you are three in number. The other occupants of the car are in another canteen in another part of the works—you are a different three—but the moment continues to exist. The food is a distraction, but always the mind revolves and reverts.

You cannot be sure just when your mind revolts from loneliness. All you know is that you are itching to bring your companions into your sphere of thought, but somehow the thing is too strong in your mind to be put into words. Then the words are on the tip of your tongue, but you realize that your companion opposite is talking; you must restrain yourself. Perhaps it was his very mention of queer happenings that had made you itch to contribute your story, but you know you must listen and be content to wait. You wish you had realized the trend of the conversation earlier; you listen, and you resolve to wait. Perhaps it is that resolution that distracts you from the moment that continues to exist. At any rate, you are listening intently, you are seizing at experience, you are gulping the wine of spring once more, the wine that the mind needs so desperately to restore it from winter sleep. Once more, you are alone from your companions; they are incidental only in that they are there. The background rumble of the canteen is incidental, only as an accompaniment to the theme. The food was distracting, but the story is distracting too. The knives and forks are but a reminder that in *those* days you dispensed with such niceties frequently. Most of the time.

You have, then, another journey and another generation; another country and another time. You have a trainload of Tommies pulling into Calais on leave from the front; there is war, that other generation's war. In that war, too, there are submarines present in the Channel with a consequent diversion of the train to Havre. A chorus of good-hearted catcalls that they are going to dish you of your trip to Blighty after all.

More precisely, you have a particular compartment in a particular coach, and in that compartment a man who hopes against hope. Surely they could not stand in his way, 'especially if there were an hour or two to spare! A man, more and more convinced with every jolt of the train, that if he could trace him no obstacle would be put in his way.

The train has arrived in Havre then; more than an hour or two, there is a whole night and the following morning to be whiled away. Too, the discovery from a redcap that the old dad is billeted in the camp on the opposite side of the canal. On one side the transit camp, on the other *his*, and linked by a bridge. More important than the bridge, a sentry, night and day. Squat there in the middle, night and day. No! For God's sake, no! Leave-parties must on no account leave the transit camp, orders is orders! You must settle down for the night as best you can and forget the old man over there. How the ruddy hell do you think we can fight this war if every Tom, Dick, and Harry clears off to look for his old man? You must rest awkward and unsleeping, and think, and make your plans. You must count the hours till dawn, and slip out of the blankets and shave in the chilly first light whilst the others are still snoring their heads off.

You are alone. You are edging your way along the camp, and keeping your eye on the bridge. The sentry is shifting from foot to foot; you are close, very close. You dodge behind a pile of sandbags to await your chance. For an age you are crouching there; not a sign of his turning to face the other way. Every time you peep from your cover, there he is, plumb in the middle. Not a chance in hell! Then you peep again, and you stare and stare. You stare because you cannot believe. You stare so long that you have to kick yourself for not getting across whilst the going is good, and then you run quickly and noiselessly and the *empty* bridge is behind you, and somebody is pointing out the old man's hut. All in a minute it seems, and you are in the hut, and there he is. His back is towards you, he is piling his blankets at the head of his bed. Your footsteps echo across the floor; he half turns, a look of startled surprise lights his eyes. Perhaps because you are expecting him to voice his great joy at seeing you, the first words on his

lips strike you as odd. Yet not so odd, as you follow his eyes through the window, follow his eyes to the sentry pacing the middle of the bridge. How the devil . . . ? But never mind, you are here son, you are here! He is grasping your hand and clapping your back; inwardly he is thanking God for this unthought of treat.

It is when you grasp that the hut is agog that you get to thinking. Everybody knows full well that not a living soul has got in or out of this so-and-so camp ever since their unit moved in—not without a pass, that is. You realize that you had hardly believed yourself that the sentry was not there. You cannot help standing and staring through the window and wondering, and you remember that you had stared from the other side; then there was no sentry. As you slip into the messroom with the old dad's mates you are still the object of excited mutterings. All the time you are stowing away your skilly you sit and wonder. It is the old dad and his mates who have it on their minds as to how you are going to get out again; you are just wondering. It is a risk, nobody wants to do the dirty on the bloke at the gate; you agree that the only chance is to slip a word to the sarge. A good mate, that sarge; you are still wondering as you press yourself back to the side of the hut till the working party comes by. You cannot take your eyes off the sentry; as you slip into the ranks you nearly muff it. The extra shovel over the old man's shoulder as near as a touch clatters to the ground. As you file by the sentry draws up to attention; you glance out of the corner of your eye. You cannot restrain one more backward look, as you drop out neatly on the other side of the bridge. As your own sergeant bawls out his where-the-hell-have-you-been you are still wondering. You do not say anything to anybody; you just wonder.

If it is not an illusion you wonder too. Or is it that you wonder because it is an illusion? You realize it is too late to start on your story; a couple of minutes and the afternoon buzzer is blowing. You nod at your companion opposite, you mutter your 'strange, that, strange!' You shift into the factory, your thoughts copulate fiercely. You think and you relate and

you ask yourself if there is anything to relate. You say to yourself that in either case you were three in number, but that is incidental. You say that you were the common factor between two generations, but that does not explain your wonder. You realize that you forgot to ask what was the time of year at Havre, but you know that the time of the year is but a facet of something that exists from one generation to another. You ponder, you consider. You argue that if the sentry drove the lorry on to the verge, in that split second afterwards there would have been no need for the road to twist; if that disastrous foot on the inside of the car flattened over the canal as a footbridge, the sentry might well stay at his post for all it would avail him. You think of the common factor, not yourself, an abstract common factor. Your mind copulates and the braincells burn in the glare of that fierce copulation.

The driver was mute, and you were mute for the rest of the journey in the spring of the year. But now you have news; you hear that with the passing of time he is no longer mute. Indeed, the reverse; he is exuberant in the expression of his happiness. You hear and you wonder and your mind goes back, and you count the months unconsciously. You think of the question you had hardly dared to ask that day the buzzer went, and how you had known the answer as if it had already been told; the buzzer had been a melancholy undertone to the simple climax of the story. You remember how you had repeated with him inwardly, that it was the last time he ever saw his father. In the afternoon in the factory you had repeated it too, and you had known that the answer would go on existing with that other moment when the road might have twisted. You repeat it now, and your mind copulates, and you wonder at your realization of the offspring of that copulation. It is as you ponder the news and count back the months that you realize. No longer do the braincells burn; you see clearly that of the mingling of the old, something new is born; you know that the whole is more than the sum of the parts. Until then, you had thought that the offspring's name was death; your touchstone was illusion. You think of the years that he and his wife had waited, of

the seemingly unending prayers. You understand his former muteness; doubly, his present overflowing.

Muteness because of years of unanswered prayer, and an end to futility looming up in the high blank wall of the lorry. Then—sacrifice! The price of answered prayer is paid. For one short recompense, for one brief sight of his son, a man is found who will loose his hold on life; the resolve is firm, unafraid. The sentry needs no second bidding; as he swings the lorry deftly on to the verge he opens the way to recompense. You count back the months and you realize that he opens the way to regeneration now that futility need not be. You see that now no obstacle lies to the granting of the prayer. You too can feel exuberance at the long ended vigil; your muteness is shattered at the new generation's birth. But you do not cease to wonder. You think of the common factor, the abstract common factor. You think of the copulation of the braincells, you think of the offspring of that copulation. You know now that the offspring's name is life. You know that of two generations you are the go-between. You know that at a crossroad of time that exists from generation to generation your world-lines crossed, and that the time of the year is but one avenue of approach. You know that the offspring is of two generations and all generations, and that it bears the common factor, the twin name death-life, or is it life-death? You do not cease to wonder.

UNPUBLISHED WORK

DACRE BALSDON

MŌDOS was the poet's name—the first o long, the second short. A Greek poet of the fifth century B.C., the golden age of Greek literature. And a poet from the little island of Geos. An unexpected provenance for a poet.

Not a poet of any great merit or of any great interest, as it seemed. A line or two survived in isolation, quoted by one Alexandrian encyclopædist or another, not for its poetic beauty but to illustrate the use of some rare Greek word, often—it has to be admitted—obscene. And the literary critics of the ancient world mentioned him occasionally as possessing a certain flashiness, a certain wit. None of them anywhere suggested that he was a poet of the first rank.

Modern scholars would hardly even have known his name had it not been for an obscure passage in which the critic pseudo-Athenaeus said that he was brilliant at—at something. At what exactly the scholars could not agree, for the word used by pseudo-Athenaeus was one about whose translation scholars hold different views. Some thought the passage meant 'good at making a point sharply', others that it meant 'good at driving a point home'. And there was a flippant suggestion, made by a rather irresponsible scholar, and regretted by other scholars, that it meant 'good at pulling people's legs'.

And there the matter would have rested, had the famous deposit of ancient Greek papyri not been found under the sands at Karsin. But they *were* found, and they were divided up and a batch of them came to England, came to Dr. Vermont, the classical scholar and papyrologist.

There was something almost mathematical in quality about Dr. Vermont's apparent inhumanity. He was pale, austere, unmarried, fiftyish. The top of his head was bald and frighteningly white. His eyes were inquisitive, but they had no kindness. His thin lips were hard, cruel.

As a very young man he had established his reputation

beyond the possibility of dispute, by editing—often with convincing emendation of the text—one of Aristotle's little studied scientific works. It was a sympathetic subject, for he inherited—people said—that hard clarity of mind that Aristotle himself had possessed.

Someone said of him, 'Watching Vermont dealing with Aristotle's text I am reminded, I can't think why, of a highly skilled fishmonger filleting fish. Not a single false stroke—not one.'

This work done, Vermont turned his attention to papyrology and showed himself at once to be a born papyrologist. He was very careful, his sight was good, and in his reconstruction of fragments which were to others illegible he showed a breadth and a depth of knowledge of ancient Greek literature greater even than his admirers—and there were many of them, for his reputation was by this time international—would have predicted.

It was when he was working through the Karsin papyri that he discovered the first fragment of the poet Mōdos. And from this moment he began to act in a curious, almost a dramatic, way altogether out of keeping with the bloodless, unemotional regularity of his earlier behaviour. For, instead of waiting to publish this fragment—eight lines of a lyric poem—in the first instalment of the Karsin papyri, he sent what one can only call a dramatic notice to a weekly literary periodical announcing that he had discovered and read, among the Karsin papyri, a fragment of the poet Mōdos which established, beyond any doubt, that, so far from being—as scholars had too readily assumed—a third rate scribbler, Mōdos was a poet who, in passionate intensity of emotion, in lyric beauty of expression, rivalled, perhaps surpassed, Sappho herself.

The effect produced by this notice was all the greater for the fact that Vermont was known through the whole world of scholarship for his cold lack of emotion and when, three months later, the fragment was published in the *Classical Times*, there was immediate agreement that Vermont had not in the smallest degree exaggerated its beauty. Here, unexpectedly and almost miraculously revealed, was perhaps the greatest of all Greek lyric poets. Lionel Hampson, who has done so much to

bring the masterpieces of ancient literature down to a level where they can be grasped by the general public, translated the fragment into English verse and the translation was published in one of the Sunday papers.

The quality of this translation was widely acclaimed but Vermont did not conceal his irritation that the translation should have been made and published. His objection cannot have been based on the quality of the translation for, like all Hampson's translations, it was a masterpiece. It rather seemed that, exhibiting human weakness for the first time in his life, Vermont felt that there was some close personal association between himself and the poet Mōdos which a stranger had no right to disturb by forming, as it were, his own connection with the poet through translating his fragment into English verse.

Other acts of Vermont confirmed the belief that he had a selfish desire to keep Mōdos to himself. He did not allow other scholars to see the precious fragment of papyrus, saying that he felt that he had a special responsibility for it until it should be handed over, with the other Karsin papyri that he was deciphering, to the museum where they would be kept. Until then, he was not prepared to show it *or any of the other Mōdos papyri* to any other scholar.

For there were other fragments of Mōdos' works, he admitted. The world of classical scholars lived in tantalizing suspense until, about two years later, the publishing house of one of the ancient Universities announced that it would publish, within the following twelve months, the fragments—thirty or forty in all—of Mōdos' poems discovered at Karsin. An annotated edition, text and notes by Dr. Vermont.

Jealous rivals smiled bitterly. Love lyrics, they said, with Aristotelian comment: Vermont would have been wise to have remained within the boundaries of his own austere field of learning and at least to have left the annotation to colleagues of more generous and humane scholarship.

The book appeared, and its effects were startling. It put two new characters on the map, a new Mōdos and a new Vermont. Mōdos was everything that Vermont claimed—and even more. There were lyrics of most intense and passionate beauty. There were drinking songs of full-blooded good spirit, merry,

ribald, heartily coarse. And there were two or three epigrams exhibiting a sharp, bitter wit. Each of the fragments, in its own *genre*, was a masterpiece. The poet's Muse, it seemed, never halted, never nodded. 'Always,' Lionel Hampson said in reviewing the book, 'the poet is at the top of his form. In its delicacy, in its vigour, there is about it all an *Elizabethan* quality.'

This time Lionel Hampson did not translate any of the fragments. This may, perhaps, be because in the introduction to the text Dr. Vermont stated that he had an English translation of the fragments in preparation, which he hoped to publish shortly.

Once the world of scholarship had readjusted its views about Mōdos and had accustomed itself to the fact that there was a new constellation in the familiar sky of classical literature, a constellation as bright as the brightest, it set about the business of readjusting its views about Vermont. His notes showed an intimate, if slightly academic, familiarity with a side of ancient life with which, looking at Vermont and hearing him talk, you would have thought that he had no sympathy at all—the life of roses and revels, slave girls—laughter, licence, even debauch.

Yet, curiously, it was only in his notes on these fragments of Mōdos that Vermont showed this side of himself. There was no greater warmth in his eyes. His lips were no fuller. He was just the same man as before—cold, frightening, austere—yes, pedantic. People—other scholars—tried to talk to him about the poet Mōdos, but he would not be drawn.

'It is a surprising thing that ancient critics failed so completely to appreciate Mōdos' genius.'

'Yes,' he would answer coldly; 'very surprising indeed.'

'It must have been a wonderful moment when you first discovered that you had, in front of you, the work of a—of a forgotten genius?'

'In life,' he would say coldly, 'one must be prepared for surprises.'

And still he was not prepared to share his treasure. Nobody but himself had as yet set eyes on the papyrus fragments. And that, people said, was the one part of this whole curious

business that was not at all surprising, was, in fact, typical of him. He possessed, unexpectedly, this very intimate knowledge of a field of ancient literature in which it might have been assumed that he took little interest. He was prepared to make use of this knowledge in issuing an annotated edition of the fragments. But the papyrus fragments themselves, rather than the literary masterpieces written on them, were the things that he really loved; and these he kept jealously to himself.

It was known that he was engaged in putting the finishing touches to his translation, the manuscript of which was due soon to be sent to the publisher. He had never before published any translations and nobody could know how good those translations would be. His enemies sniffed and said that he was riding for a fall, that he was making an ass of himself, that when his translations appeared they would reveal the full extent of his imaginative limitations. Others said that, as he had sprung one surprise on the world, he might well spring another.

He lived in a large, cold house with an old housekeeper, a spinster who lavished on him that affection which, had she lived alone, she would have wasted on a cat or a dog. She was not dismayed or depressed that he responded so coldly to all the attention which she gave him. She liked—almost loved—him most for being so unpractical in the daily business of living—forgetting to pay his bills, forgetting until he had been reminded—sometimes more than once—to leave his desk and come in to his dining-room for his meals.

She was a placid and imperturbable old body, and therefore, when she went one day into his study to tell him that his lunch was getting cold and found that, instead of sitting at his desk he had fallen forward over it, with his head on the blotter, she was not so dismayed as to forget her practical efficiency. She shook him, thinking that he must have fallen asleep and, when he did not respond, she felt his forehead, which was warm, and his hands, which were cold. She picked up a silver inkstand from the desk and, putting it in front of his mouth, she saw that it clouded and that he was therefore breathing. She felt sure then that the best thing to do was to go straight to the telephone and summon the doctor. After which she returned to the

desk and, with unexpected strength—but he was not very heavy—lifted him from his chair and laid him on a sofa. She had already placed a hot-water bottle under his feet and removed his boots when the doctor arrived.

The doctor was called Mell and, after a quick examination, he assured the housekeeper that there was no immediate cause of alarm. Dr. Vermont must be got to bed. He must be kept warm. He would probably recover consciousness quite quickly. After which he must be kept very quiet until the doctor had come and given him a thorough overhaul.

‘Overwork, no doubt,’ he said. ‘A general collapse. He will have to take things very quietly for a bit.’

He came again in the afternoon and again examined Vermont, who was now lying in bed. He was much surprised that he had not recovered consciousness, and said that he would send round a nurse.

‘I can’t make out that frown on his face,’ he said. ‘It is curious. Does he normally look like that?’

The housekeeper said that she had never seen such an expression on his face.

‘Funny,’ the doctor said. ‘As if something had—had *shocked* him.’

He had not recovered consciousness by the following morning, and the doctor therefore summoned a colleague to give a second opinion. He was altogether puzzled by the case, for Vermont’s pulse was strong and regular and his reflexes, as far as they could be tested, were everything that they should be.

The colleague was puzzled too. Shock was all that he could suggest—sudden and acute shock. On this both doctors agreed. But how, sitting alone at his quiet desk, could he have had a shock of this violence? The papers on his desk gave no hint. Open on his desk was a copy of his published edition of the fragments of Mōdos. And there was a piece of paper on which he had evidently intended to write. But there was only a fragment of writing, the two words *soft-faced*. That, and nothing more.

All day the nurse sat in his bedroom, except in the afternoon when she went out for a walk and the housekeeper sat there

instead. After tea they sat there together, knitting both of them and chattering quietly. The nurse said that the case was unlike any that she had ever known.

'It is his face that worries me,' the housekeeper said. 'First there was that frown. He looked puzzled. And now, it seems, though this may be imaginative, he looks angry—angry and, you might say, *shocked*.'

This was on the third evening. Still he had not recovered consciousness.

Suddenly his lips began to move. He mumbled something and then he said, very clearly and firmly, 'No.' It was the voice of a grown man sternly forbidding a small boy to do something naughty.

'He'll come round in no time now,' the nurse said. 'You go away now and make some nice warm soup, very thin, mind. He will want something when he comes round.'

But he didn't. He lay still, his expression set more and more in an appearance of stern anger.

The following night he spoke again. He said, 'I forbid you.' And after an interval, he said again, 'How dare you? You ought to be ashamed of yourself.'

'It is curious,' the housekeeper said, 'him lying there like that, his body I mean. It is like as if the *real* him was right away somewhere else with somebody that he was talking to.'

'Somebody that he was *giving* a good talking to,' the nurse said, for she had a dry sense of humour. 'Someone he doesn't like much, by the sound of it.'

Two nights later, almost a week after his collapse, he recovered consciousness. He spoke very little either to his housekeeper or to his nurse. The doctor told him that he had evidently been overworking and that he must rest. He had satisfied himself that there was nothing organically the matter with him and was glad that an illness, whose symptoms he found quite inexplicable, seemed to have cured itself of its own accord.

Vermont was up in another week and back at work a fortnight after that. And a few days later he invited the Curator of the Museum, to which the papyrus fragments belonged, to come and see him. The curator's name was Mr. Stockmarsh.

When Mr. Stockmarsh came into the study he was conscious at once of a very curious smell, almost the 'smell of burning paper. A smell of burning, certainly; yet not quite the smell of burning *paper*. He looked at the fire. It was impossible to tell if anything had just been burnt in it, apart from the logs which were burning there.

Vermont said: 'I asked you to come and see me because I have now finished work on your papyri. They can now go back to the museum and to your keeping. But there is one very unfortunate thing. The Mōdos papyri have disappeared.'

'Disappeared?'

The curator could not believe that he had heard Vermont properly. He spoke quietly, and almost unconcernedly, about something which, if true, would be the greatest disaster in the whole history of papyrology. The Mōdos fragments were of inestimable value and would be of greater importance than any treasure, papyrus or other, that the Museum possessed.

'Yes,' Vermont said. 'I kept them locked in this cupboard. As you know, I had a collapse. When I recovered, I went to the cupboard, and it was empty. You can rule out the possibility of theft. There seems to me no doubt that, at the moment of my collapse, I must unconsciously have taken them and thrown them into the fire.'

Still Mr. Stockmarsh could not believe that what he was hearing was true. Why was Vermont not more distressed? He would have expected a man so conscientious to be on the verge of suicide, not to be calmly, unemotionally, and without any guilt admitting the sole responsibility for the destruction of, perhaps, the most important papyrus fragments in the world.

For a moment he wondered if Vermont was lying; if he wanted in some mad way to keep the papyri himself, and not to part with them. But he decided that this was not a feasible suggestion. Vermont above all men had the high integrity of the scholar.

'Mōdos,' Stockmarsh murmured. 'Mōdos. The greatest—in some ways, yes—the greatest poet of them all.'

Vermont leant forward with an intense excitement, the sort of look which Stockmarsh had never before seen on his cold, emotionless face.

'Mōdos,' he said, almost breathlessly. 'I'll tell you a thing or two about Mōdos. My word, I will . . .'

He did not complete the sentence. He was looking over Stockmarsh's shoulder, at the corner of the room behind him as if he saw something—somebody—there; somebody who shocked, who angered him. In a moment that angry look, so familiar to the nurse who had sat by his bedside, was on his face.

'At least,' Stockmarsh said, 'we have the texts. It is a mercy that you had managed to publish them. Lovely things. So *sensitive*, so . . .'

Vermont interrupted him breathlessly.

'A nasty, dirty little guttersnipe,' he said venomously. 'A nasty, dirty, little guttersnipe.'

And the moment he said it, he started. Mr. Stockmarsh started too and looked quickly over his shoulder.

'What was that?' he asked quickly.

'Nothing,' Vermont said.

But Stockmarsh had heard, very distinctly, a peal of merry laughter, full-blooded, mocking, joyous. It seemed to come from the corner of the room behind him.

Odd.

'But,' he said to Vermont, 'your translation will be all right. When will that come out?'

'Never,' Vermont said fiercely. 'Never.'

* * *

It is a curious story, the story of the discovery and the subsequent disappearance of the Mōdos papyri. Nobody has ever explained it satisfactorily.

Vermont, never a communicative man, was completely uncommunicative after his interview with the Curator. He returned to editing the texts of Aristotle's scientific works. Curiously, he could not any longer endure to work in silence and he bought a wireless set, which he turned on, hideously loudly, and kept turned on all day while he was working. Perhaps, in order to keep out some other noise, something that he was afraid of hearing.

He did not live long, however. About four months later he

contracted pneumonia and died. He was delirious during his illness, and there was a narrow consistency about his delirium. All the time he was rebuking somebody. 'I won't have it,' he would say. 'Disgusting . . . how *dare* you? . . . of course, it can't be published.'

His nurse was the nurse who had attended him before.

And, when it was all over, she said to the housekeeper, 'I shall be glad enough to be out of this house. You know it is a funny thing. I am not imaginative. And I have spent time enough sitting alone at night with people who were very ill and dying. But there was something funny about this case. Every now and then at night, particularly after he had had one of his angry bouts, I seemed to hear something in a corner of the room—like somebody *laughing*.'

'And what was so strange,' she added, 'was that it was always such a *young* laugh. And *he* seemed so old.'

DACRE BALSDON was born in 1901 in North Devon. He is a Fellow of Exeter College, Oxford, tutor and lecturer in Ancient History, and has written a number of articles on Roman History as well as a biography of the Emperor Gaius and four satirical novels. Another novel is to be published shortly.

FILM DIRECTORS IN FRANCE

I. GRÜNBERG

JACQUES BECKER, Director of *Antoine et Antoinette* and *Goupi Mains Rouges*.

I

A NATIONAL or international film prize does not always prove the merits of a film. But *Antoine et Antoinette* by Jacques Becker, which won one of the first prizes at Cannes, is an excellent film. After having seen *Goupi Mains Rouges*, the masterpiece of the same director, I was very curious to meet Becker. *Antoine et Antoinette*, so different from *Goupi* and, in its way, hardly less important, finally decided me. A lucky chance helped me, and a few days after his return from Cannes I was able to meet Jacques Becker in his friendly bright house in one of the western suburbs of Paris.

A clear transparent October day, which was also the first day of the great underground and bus strike. Paris was again going through one of its all too frequent post-war crises. You wouldn't notice it, though, but for the unusual number of people walking the streets. A real mass migration ! The city was as lovely and beautiful as ever. I thought of *Antoine et Antoinette*, of the optimism of the film which is a kind of credo to Paris. History will rightly be astonished at the fact that such a constructive work could be created in such a deeply shaken time. How is, I wonder, the man who had the courage, the audacity, to conceive and to realize that straight and honest film in such a confused and muddled epoch?

Just as I enter the little garden in front of Becker's house, and before I have time to ring the bell, I hear the noise of a powerful motor-cycle. Jacques Becker apologizes for being a bit late. He has just returned from a week-end in his country house near Paris. His hand as he shakes mine is hard as iron. The hand of a sportsman, of a man used to grip

a steering wheel, a man out of our iron age. On a strong body sits an energetic head with clear and sharp features, 'a well-formed high forehead under the slightly curled hair streaked with grey, a deep line between the concentrated eyes, a powerful nose, strong cheekbones and a firm mouth and chin. In the beginning of our talk the telephone interrupts us again and again and gives me the welcome occasion to have a closer look at Jacques Becker. At last the telephone keeps quiet for a while and we can talk in peace.

We are speaking of Becker's first film impressions. 'Like you, I am a child of the film age,' he says. 'On Thursdays, when we had no school, I went twice in the afternoon to cinema. My parents allowed me one more visit a week to an evening performance. . .

'What early films impressed me most? Before the first world war, when I was six or seven, I probably went only once to the cinema. I remember the deep impression made on me by a film in which a prisoner in a tower sent out letters with the help of a pigeon. On the torn-off tail of his shirt he wrote a message with his finger, dipped in his own blood . . . the Italian film *Cabiria* which I saw in 1918 at the age of twelve, is the first film I remember clearly. It was a wonderful show. . . Since I was 14 or 15 I was determined to make films. Never did I think of expressing myself by any other means than through films. . .

'Whom do I consider the greatest film creator? Besides Charlie Chaplin, undoubtedly Erich von Stroheim. Since I saw his early film, *Foolish Wives*, he impressed me as one of the most important masters of the cinema. I have worked with him once as his assistant on his film, *The Iron Crown*.

'Who else did you work with?

'Only with Jean Renoir. I was twenty-four when I started. Since then I have worked with Renoir in most of the films he made in France. My first own film, *Le Dernier Atout*, was made in 1942, *Goupi Mains Rouges* in the same year. The work on *Falbalas* was interrupted by the Liberation, and lasted through 1944 and 1945. Finally, *Antoine et Antoinette* was made during last year. . .'

'Why hasn't *Goupi Mains Rouges* been shown in London?'

'It is a very confused story. . . The film was sold to England long ago. But they want to show it there simultaneously in the original and in a dubbed version. Now an American company had made two dubbings, both of them unsatisfactory. Meanwhile they have decided in the U.S.A. not to show any more dubbed versions, but only the originals. It seems that at present they are working in England on a new dubbing. Perhaps one day the film will be shown after all. . .'

I think of Becker's two most important films—the powerful, hard peasant film *Goupi* and the so different, entirely Parisian, *Antoine et Antoinette*, and I ask Becker whether he comes from the city or from the country.

'From the city,' he answers. 'I am a hundred per cent Parisian. And I believe in Paris.'

The answer sounds like a Credo. The answer is, as further questions prove, a Credo, one of the main articles in Jacques Becker's Credo which runs as follows: 'I believe in the possibility of entertaining friendship and in the difficulty of maintaining love. I believe in the value of effort. And I believe above all in Paris. In my work I do not want to prove anything except that life is stronger than everything else.'

He intends next to do a gay film whose subject he outlines and in which he wants to employ a young French actress who has lately become well known. We also speak of the great development of the French film which has started since, and as Becker indicates, because of the 'talkies', of the deep crisis of the French film which has been caused by the Blum-Byrnes agreement, and about many other things which cannot be mentioned in this short article. To finish our talk Jacques Becker says these simple words which characterize better than any high flown phrases the man and the artist:

'The only other thing I have to say is that I wish that those who work in films should take their profession more seriously than they do!'

II

If 'Silence is gold', why did René Clair prefer silver, or even lead? I found it sad to see that dry, humourless, at the utmost

honourable, production of the author of *Sous les toits de Paris* and *Le Million*. Where has all his charm and freshness gone? Was he so entirely dried up in Hollywood that he had nothing better to offer after his return to France than this warmed-up dish, this rather stale re-hash of his old inventions and ideas? The film is, of course, competently done. Some people may also like Maurice Chevalier, and the reconstitution of some period scenes is quite amusing. But that is about all. The one moving thing about the film is the possible application of the aged beau in the picture to the case of René Clair as a creator. But can that have been intentional? I do not think so. And that is the film which gets at an international film festival the first prize! Why should recognition and glory always come when the substance has gone! True, *Sous les toits de Paris* and *Le Million* have been great successes in their time. But how many people knew of René Clair when he made *Entracte*, *Les Deux Timides*, and *Le chapeau de paille d'Italie*?

The overrated *Le silence est d'or* brings to my mind one of the most charming recent French films, of which little was heard in Paris and probably nothing at all abroad: Pierre Prévert's *Voyage surprise*, a delightful picture which, in its little finger, has got more ideas, humour, invention than a dozen well-known films. Pierre Prévert has made some other films before, among them *L'affaire est dans le sac*, now a kind of classic in the 'loufoque' style, which was shown by the Cinémathèque Française at the last Venise Biennale. Pierre Prévert has the chance, and the bad luck, to be the not-much-younger brother of the famous Jacques Prévert. But Pierre Prévert is quite a force in himself. *Voyage surprise*, honourably appreciated by the critics, shamefully underrated by the producers—whose speciality in France seems to be to oppose any important new work; they did it in the case of *Enfants du paradis*—and enthusiastically acclaimed by the French public in the cinemas all over Paris—is a sufficient proof of Pierre Prévert's great talent. The film, made without any stars but with a number of excellent young actors who must have thoroughly enjoyed their work, is not one of the greatest films ever made, but a picture so full of movement, of new and unexpected ideas and gags, so fresh, funny, and poetic at the

I. GRÜNBERG

same time, that it will, in my opinion, remain in the history of the French film. Authentically French, it should, in spite of language difficulties and a rather intricate plot, go down very well with English audiences. But you don't know French producers if you expect them to judge such a film at its value, to publicize it properly, or to get it abroad. In any other country a director like Pierre Prévert would be overwhelmed with offers. In France where the mortal Blum-Byrnes agreement has brought about the closing down of most film studios, men with new ideas have very little chance indeed. Are we, in spite of its great possibilities and of the abundance of talent among its directors and filmwriters, to witness the decline of the French film.

(I. Grünberg has worked for many years as a newspaper correspondent in Paris and London. He has been closely connected, for the last twenty years with the French avant-garde in literature, theatre, film.)

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

THE DARK TOWER AND OTHER BROADCAST

PLAYS. LOUIS MACNEICE. Faber. 8s 6d.

QUAY SOUTH. HOWARD CLEWES. Bodley Head. 5s.

LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS. MAURICE COLLIS.

With designs for the Stage by Feliks Topolski. Faber. 16s.

THE poets have been strangely slow in taking hold of the advantages offered them by radio broadcasting as a creative medium. Poetic drama almost always suffers on the stage, to my mind, from the discrepancy between the visual illusion and the vision the words evoke. It seems to be essential that Helen should keep her back to the audience when Faustus cries out: 'Is this the face,' etc. So, in the brief interval before television becomes universal, poetry has an opportunity to recover all it has lost through being divorced from the spoken word whilst still remaining free from the 'tyrannical demands' of the eye. Mr. MacNeice expresses the hope that 'sound' broadcasting may retain a place of its own in the future. Having experienced the ruthlessness with which technical development sweeps all other considerations aside, one cannot feel very optimistic about this.

Mr. MacNeice, at any rate, has grasped the opportunity to exploit the new medium in a creative way and *Christopher Columbus* and the present volume together form an impressive body of work. It may be objected that in reading what is virtually a script we lose a 'dimension', as Mr. MacNeice phrases it. That is true, and that is where demands are made on the reader to 'hear it' to translate the printed words into sound. The play that loses most, I think, is *The Dark Tower* itself, when it lacks the support of Benjamin Britten's music. I found the words alone had little evocative power. A poet doesn't have to define evil, it is true; but he has to produce in us a sensation of revulsion or horror.

Yet Mr. MacNeice is primarily a poet, and this comes out in two other pieces—the dramatization of a Russian folk-story, *The Nosebag*, and a reconstruction of Tchekhov's last hours, *Sunbeams in His Hat*, in spite of the fact that they are written

in prose. The difficulty of catching such an evanescent character as Tchekhov's is obvious, and death scenes invite the sentimental. It is Mr. MacNeice's sensitiveness to the moods in human relations which enables him to surmount the difficulties of his theme and to leave his reader, or listener, with a sense of sadness which is yet warmed by the revelation of Tchekhov's richly poetic, and in a sense robust, character. *The Nosebag*, as befits its subject, uses a technique of broader strokes and peasant humour, and its passages of fantasy are superb.

In the plays mentioned the subtlety or ingenuity of the technique is not obtrusive, and the non-professional reader may not notice how masterly Mr. MacNeice's solutions of his problems sometimes are—which is as it should be.

Quay South is a dramatized version of one of the best of the novels of the 'waiting war' period, and it has been successfully produced by Reunion Theatre. The old skipper who sails his ship into a minefield rather than have her taken over by the military and probably sunk as a blockship, is in the tradition of English cranky individualism. So is the conflict between the 'regular' adjutant and the war-time company commander, wrestling over the body of the 'other rank' who has a bit of a soul and a tendency to leave buttons undone. Perhaps the play is in a way another example of the sentimentalization of the misfit, which has been overdone; yet in its treatment it has originality. The dialogue is a trifle reminiscent of the novel form and needs crisping up, but certainly Mr. Clewes' next play will be looked for with high expectations.

It is a far cry from a decrepit harbour in war-time England to the passion and pageantry of a Burmese court. The contrast is emphasized by the austerity of the one production and the sumptuousness of the other, which has Mr. Topolski's designs lavishly inserted in the text and on folding collotype plates. Do these aid or inhibit the imagination? The best of them do enhance the text, but a number are very trifling and seem to have been chosen without much discrimination.

This tragedy about a Burmese prince who believes himself to have attained the mystic status of Lord of the Three Worlds, whilst the Tartars are cutting their way through to his capital,

is one that the Elizabethans would have revelled in. It is a poetic theme, but the language rarely soars, to the needed intensity. When the Tartars are only a few hours away and the Court is being evacuated downstream, one feels that they might have been going on a trip to the seaside instead of fleeing before merciless enemies. When the king hears that the Chief Priest, the villain of the piece, has grabbed for himself the royal escape boats, he says: 'I should have put him to death last night.' It is true that the stage directions indicate that this is to be said 'savagely'. Even so the form of words hardly seems to reflect the crisis of the situation. To make us realize the king's dementia a touch of divine madness should illuminate the writing. As it was, one found Mr. Collis's latest study in the exotic interesting, certainly, but far from enthralling.

EDGELL RICKWORD

THE SPIRIT OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY. FUNG YU-LAN.

(Translated by E. R. HUGHES.) Kegan Paul. 15s.

MR. HUGHES, already widely known for his two admirable volumes of translations of some of the most central works in the history of Chinese thought, has added to our debt by his translation of this useful handbook. With his *Chinese Philosophy in Classical Times* and his *Great Learning and the Mean in Action* the student of what is, after all, the only major recognizably philosophical tradition outside the West can gain a clearer view of the contents of this great school than was ever previously possible. Along with the attractive labours of Mr. Waley in this field Mr. Hughes' work should prove of great value in fruitfully cross-fertilizing Western thinking with a stock which, unlike the Indian, seems different enough to be exciting and yet close enough to be comprehensible.

Dr. Fung's book is not, I think, a self-subsistent account of Chinese philosophy. The chapter, for example, on the Yi scripture and the hexagrams must surely be incomprehensible to anyone lacking a previous acquaintance with this excessively odd intellectual structure. What it is is rather a good, though not superlatively good, companion to the study of Chinese thought and commentary on the texts written by a man whose

intellectual tradition is precisely the understanding of these texts.

Dr. Fung suffers from two disadvantages in this task: his standard of judgment is that of his own philosophy as expounded in a prefatory note, and this makes his judgment at times curiously severe and unsympathetic. Secondly, I suspect him of twisting the past in the interests of the Kuomintang. This, however, may be unfair and would be a churlish note on which to close the review of what is, all in all, a good and useful book.

DONALD G. MACRAE

FOUR CENTURIES OF WITCH BELIEFS. R. TREVOR DAVIES. Methuen. 15s.

THE ARROW AND THE SWORD. HUGH ROSS WILLIAMSON. Preface by Canon V. A. DEMANT. Faber. 10s. 6d.

I AM somewhat surprised that Mr. Ross Williamson should declare 'To state baldly that a King and a Primate of England, were, within seventy years of each other, the self-immolated victims of a cult which preserved the rites of the primitive fertility ritual is to invite derision'. Scarcely among the informed, or even intelligent student of history? Whatever other centuries may have made of it, belief in witchcraft is to-day surely and sanely accepted.

The author of *Four Centuries of Witch Beliefs* will not commit himself. He assumes that the particular witchcraft here considered was pure delusion and superstition. Whether all witchcraft has always been so is a moot point upon which he adventures no opinion; nor is he qualified to do so. It seems strange that one should study a subject, or one aspect of it, without 'adventuring' to find what is behind that subject. But another question which has been so ably investigated by Miss M. Murray and other writers he also ignores—viz. whether witches were members of a pre-Christian religious body that has survived underground since the Dark Ages.' This ignoring lessens the value of his book, for witchcraft is a matter of religion, and religion deals with man's views of life and death, and the ritual in which they are expressed. To limit your book, even though you call it a 'spicilegium'—to

examination of 'the function of witch-beliefs in provoking that hostility to the earlier Stuarts, which culminated in the Great Rebellion and the establishment of the Commonwealth and Protectorate' is like folding a cloud into a drawer or locking Ariel inside a tree.

Within these limits—which are the four centuries since the accession of Queen Elizabeth—Professor Davies has, however, compiled a book which does, as he hopes, 'throw light upon an obscure area in one of the most important episodes of our national history.' Further, if a reader is inquisitive not only about the causes of the overthrow of the earlier Stuarts but about such matters as the conditions under which witch-terror and hunting most flourished, he will find it here. Though, as has been said, the author offers no opinion on, and no explanation of, witchcraft, he has produced a work rich in research and quotation which will startle even those who think they know more than a little of the subject, and much as one may regret the limitation of its treatment, gratitude must acknowledge that it fills in gaps, deepens the readers' knowledge, and should lead him to the acquiring of more. Mr. Ross Williamson has no academic scruples about stating his opinions, and highly interestingly he does so. The 'Arrow' of his title is that which killed William Rufus, and the 'Sword' that which killed Thomas à Becket. He takes as his starting point the suggestion that these were ritual murders, or sacrifices, of pre-Christian cult. This will not surprise any—and they should be all—familiar with the work of Miss M. Murray. Mr. Ross Williamson is himself first to acknowledge that, and his book is mainly a collation of findings by her and others in this field.

It is an erudite gathering together, but one cannot help feeling that it is also a sad sign of the general ill-digesting of even so undigested a work as *The Golden Bough* that it should be necessary! As Canon Dymant says in his preface, 'There have been, in my opinion, several such successful conspiracies (*of silence*) in history and literature. We should not rule them out of court because to admit them as successful means to acknowledge that we have been misled by a sustained and astute co-operative effort in planned intelligence'. That is, by the new (Christian) religion, determined to drive out the

old (pagan). Or, put another way, by Son-worship zealously absorbing sun-worship; though with this phrasing, I fancy, Mr. Ross Williamson could not *agrée*.

But he does agree that history, as we have it, of the pre-Christian era in England has been handed down to us by those who, as Christians, were biased against the faith of earlier times. Yet Rufus (and there is witch-significance in that colour) held to the old religion, and was beloved by the people, who accepted him, although he was representative of the hated Conquest. It is, indeed, the love of the people for Rufus—who is always held up as a Bad King—that first makes us suspicious of his chroniclers' integrity, and lays the way clear for just such an examination as Mr. Ross Williamson's.

His thesis is that of sacrifice and resurrection. From the Mithraic cult of the Bull as the origin of all life—in a hunting state of culture, it was the animal, not the man who was the god—he shows how inevitably the Sun became the centre of the sacrificial system. Then he reminds us how, in 3000 B.C., the Pharaoh was already thought of as a manifestation of the Sun god. Thence, the progression is one familiar to all students of comparative religion. Mr. Ross-Williamson's reading is deep as well as wide; he can observe that 'in the eventual triumph of the god is the climax of all theologies as well as the "happy ending" of all fairy tales,' and expounding of his theme leads him to dilate, wisely and with relevance, on the nature of love, on man's hopes, fears, 'the assumptions underlying astrology, the doctrines of Plato, the problems of the Fourth Gospel and the Apocalypse, the connection between the Albigenes and the Troubadours and the relationship of both to the medieval witch-cult'—and much else of fundamental interest, value, and challenge. The Albigenes, or Cathars, were heretics; and Mr. Ross Williamson is a priest. He sees all, therefore, in terms of Heresy; Christianity, or the Church, is to him not one branch of many faiths but the Faith.

There, as one who always found orthodox Christianity in any form a peculiarly barbaric expression of the Great Mysteries, I part company from his book. That does not prevent me from finding it important and hoping it will be

influential. I only question whether its essentially dual nature will not put obstacles in the way of its reaching, adequately, those who could most benefit from it, and I myself am of those who think a better case could have been made out for Richard III than for Becket.

TREVOR JAMES

ELIZABETH IS MISSING. LILLIAN DE LA TORRE. Michael Joseph. 15s.

SOME HUMAN ODDITIES. E. J. DINGWALL. With twelve plates. Home and van Thal. 15s.

On 1st January, 1753 (new style), a girl of eighteen disappeared from Houndsditch. She returned home, starving, four weeks later, with a tale that set all London by the ears, and was the cause of long and repeated examination. This was Elizabeth Canning. Her case became one of the great classic mysteries. Thirty-six pamphleteers of her own time, and more than twenty writers since—including Fielding and Voltaire—speculated upon her strange story. This latest book interprets in the light of modern research the case, or rather cases, for her first triumph was followed by her own trial and by deportation. The author step by step establishes, I think, beyond doubt that Elizabeth Canning was a hysteric. But she does it in a way to make one question whether it was worth doing. The most interesting fact to emerge is the buying-off of some gypsies who were fortuitously caught up in her adventures. They were Governmental excise-spies (snoopers, we should now call them) whose exact comings and goings the Government had no wish to be made known. But these, as it turns out, had nothing to do with the case, and the rest of the book, which has, is really raking over a muck-heap—with too-evident relish. 'So rich and raffish is the story that it reads like fiction,' and the author's approach is such that one feels she means not only that it shall, but also that it shall reach the goal of a certain kind of successful fiction—Hollywood. I found her style, or verbose lack of it, nauseatingly vulgar, and the subject not in the least worth the considerable amount of research she had put into it.

Dr. Dingwall, on the other hand, by manner and method,

avoids the sensational. He divides his book into two sections. The first gives account, or portraits, of the six 'odd' people he has chosen to study—St. Joseph of Copertino, the friar who flew; James Allen, one of the many women who have lived, worked, and wed as a man; Berbiguier, the eighteenth-century scourge of demons, who left an account of his life, which gives detailed material for development of delusion; Francois de Páris, the Deacon of Paris, round whose grave astonishing scenes of ecstasy and possession took place; D. D. Home, the sorcerer whom Dickens denounced as a 'ruffian and a scoundrel', and, finally, 'Angel Anna' over whose nameless crimes even the medical press drew a veil. In the second part of the book, supplementary chapters, or appendices, give full documentation and also discussion of each case from the medical and psychological point of view. The author's curiosity in these borderland phenomena is in no sense morbid, nor does it pander to any reader who may be. He examines them carefully, respectfully, one might almost say reverently, in the hope of discovering the motive or compulsion behind such behaviour and thereby, some method of cure and above all, of understanding.

TREVOR JAMES

FABULOUS VOYAGER. RICHARD M. KAIN. University of Chicago Press (U.S.A.) and Cambridge University Press (Great Britain). 22s. 6d.

FROM America comes yet another interesting study of James Joyce. In *Fabulous Voyager*, Mr. Kain makes a contribution to the literature on Joyce's masterpiece which the beginner no less than the most experienced student should find useful and enjoy.

It seems to me that our English tendency to disparage detailed research of the kind which has enabled Mr. Kain to give us the valuable appendixes to his book has gone too far, and it should certainly help us to moderate our view of this question to see such careful work side by side with penetrating exegesis, as we do in this book. The appendixes include a biographical dictionary of *Ulysses*, a carefully annotated description of the character of Bloom, a directory of the Dublin addresses men-

tioned in the text, and an index of verbal motifs; the last separates motifs associated with Stephen from those associated with Bloom. The reconstruction of the details of events behind the story is also helpful, and the chapter on the often neglected minor characters ('All Too Irish') is welcome. It is pleasant, too, in a book on any of Joyce's major works, to find photographs and a map of Dublin. One might have wished that the date of the former had been nearer that of *Ulysses*; but this is of little practical consequence, since 16th June, 1904, 'becomes all time.'

Mr. Kain is on sure ground when he stresses the satirical character of *Ulysses*. If by 'philosophic intent' Mr. Kain is thinking of a considered metaphysical theory behind Joyce's work, he produces no evidence of it (nor could he, I think); but if, as seems more likely, he means only to use 'philosophy', as literary critics often do, in the sense of a *Weltanschauung*, surely no one would disagree that it is to be found. That *Ulysses* 'constitutes a most powerful challenge to commercialism, vulgarity, ignorance, prejudice, and inertia' is certainly indisputable. The greatest wonder of Joyce's novel lies, however, rather in the intricate artistic technique of its symbols, in its author's peculiar gift for linguistic fun, and the power of his genius for literary *discovery* which goes with his skill in exposing the psychological structure of what lies beneath man and his city. Mr. Kain is sensitive to all these qualities, and his interpretation, always sane and balanced, is particularly illuminating in chapters such as 'Oceansong' (the Sirens scene, which he calls 'the *andante cantabile* section of the novel'), and 'Music Everywhere'. The latter would be specially useful to anyone approaching *Ulysses* for the first time. It is significant that in his preface Mr. Kain remembers his debt to two harpsichordists who animated his feeling for Joycean style.

I am more impressed by Joyce's love for the classical than by his 'medieval love of minute decorative detail' which the author attributes to a 'scholastic mentality, disciplined by years of Jesuit schooling'. This is indubitably a factor in Joycean style; but one should not forget that the Middle Ages may be said to have ended before Loyola was born, and that the early successes of the society were due rather to its appeal

to the imaginative and intellectual temper of an age of Renaissance. Mr. Kain, who recognizes Joyce's Elizabethan affinities, is nearer the mark when he sees *Ulysses* to be 'a modern *Hamlet*', a *Hamlet* without the last three acts. Another influence on Joyce was, of course, the peculiar atmosphere of Dublin, its cold, classical grandeur and Georgian slums combined with its position as the metropolis of a perfervidly ultramontane Catholic island; it is in this background that must be seen Joyce's cosmopolitan outlook and vivacious appreciation of classicism.

It is to be hoped that a future edition will provide an opportunity to correct the occasional misprints which in such a work on Joyce are not easy to avoid. In reading the book, I have found but few; among these I mention 'the silent *t* in "ptarmigan"', which, of course, cannot be intended. *Fabulous Voyagers* may be warmly commended to all who value balanced judgment and keen insight in interpreting *Ulysses*.

GEDDES MACGREGOR

THE CHEROKEE STRIP. MARQUIS JAMES. Phoenix. 12s. 6d. THOSE who derive our ideas of American history almost entirely from the films must always be grateful for a book like Marquis James's *Cherokee Strip*. A scene hitherto only shown in the glare of arc-light sunshine is suddenly brought near and seen in plain daylight, all the details sharp and the voices close to our ears. The films have created a legend of the pioneers of the Middle West: the difference between legend and history is that legend soothes us with supermen who shoulder our burden, whereas history stirs us with the great feats that ordinary men can rise to when they shoulder the burden themselves. In Mr. James's book we feel the fascination of the legend, for his young mind was saturated with stories of the Golden Age of the pioneers, but he combines the art of the story-teller with the historian's respect for fact; the result is a gem of historical autobiography. He and his family were right in the midst of the life of the new town, Enid, in the Cherokee Strip; its history was their history, but with what deft and sparing art he can illumine both: when, for instance, he tells of going, as a small boy, with his mother to see the last famous

outlaw dying in the jail, his brief account adds delicately to our picture of his mother as well as portraying the outlaw. Everyone was flocking to see this man, Dick Yeager, bringing him chicken and feeding his vanity and their own by making a hero of him.

'Mama was looking at Dick Yeager's face. It was covered with a reddish stubble of beard. His eyes were bright blue. In a moment Mama said:

' "Dick Yeager, I hope you rest comfortably while you are here. Now, Ad, if you will excuse us."

'Mama took my hand. While Ad was unlocking the door I looked at the gigantic figure on the cot. I wanted to say something, but it was Dick who spoke.

' "Bub, jus' you recollect' what I tol' you: bigges' outlaw the Territory ever had."

'When we got outside Ad said:

' "Well, Madam, that was the coolest reception Dick's had so far."

'The look of sadness in my mother's grey eyes stopped Ad's banter.

' "What a tragic sight to see," she said, and added, "I reckon outlaws sometimes are just made by what happens to them."

Marquis James's earliest memories were of the claim—the creek, the big tree, the two-storey house in which someone had overlooked the staircase. His father, Judge James, had made the Run in 1893, staked his claim and lived there with his wife and two-year-old son until, after a few years, his speculations ran away with the land and they moved into the town. Nearest neighbour on the claim was Mr. Howells and it was he, an old campaigner, who told the boy all the stories he loved to hear of his adventures with outlaws, Indians, rebels, and cowboys; even after he had had to admit to himself that so much could never have been crowded into the life of one man, he still loved these tall stories. Then he had an adventure himself and his own story to tell. He was bitten by a rattler when he went with a corn-knife to cut himself a melon. On feeling the bite he had dropped the knife in terror and it must have severed the snake for it was found cut plumb in two.

His father showed the rattles to his friends, saying that his boy hadn't left the melon patch until he'd killed the snake. 'So it was Papa, really,' reflects Mr. James modestly; 'who put me on the track of telling this story properly.' From this it is logical enough that he should have become a newspaper reporter and successful editor in his home town before he was twenty.

In the Cherokee Strip history flew from the wigwam to the Chamber of Commerce era in the span of one boyhood. It was a time of contrasts, sudden changes; it was exciting to be so close to the rush and struggle to establish in this vast plain all the features of American civilization, good and bad, which were by now well defined elsewhere. And it was exciting to go into the alleys and see at the back doors of the workshops how things were made and how the town grew out of the work of these craftsmen—the ideal practical education. At Mr. Luft's you could see how he made a saddle; Uncle John Dollar was making a pair of boots; Mr. Divers was painting a sign. Jack McCutcheon, tinker, fixed anything, from brollies to bicycles, and at the Enid Bakery you could see Mrs. Oligschleger bake bread. And these were all friendly neighbours, not too hurried and worried to explain a point. But it was printing that fascinated Marquis James most; the jargon and yarns of itinerant printers captured his imagination and fired him with a lasting ambition.

It is impossible to convey the variety and fullness of this story. All sorts of characters start as the vague objects of a small boy's affections and gradually grow to solid form and colour in the eyes of the young man. Mr. James writes with an ease, directness, and humour which make him a pleasure to read and to remember.

GWEN MARSH

A NIGHT WITH JUPITER. Edited by CHARLES HENRI FORD. Dennis Dobson. 8s. 6d.

I DON'T know what to call it, but it's unlike anything the correspondence schools have taught! Mr. Ford's volume is a contemporary amalgam of prose that has broken down from the old water-tight departmentalization and has achieved a

middle state of rhapsodic consciousness. Here, is to be found writing that is aware of its age, that learnt the lessons of *Transition*, and that has sought for Rimbaud's 'alchemy of the word'. The title piece, and one other, is by Henry Miller, and shows to the best advantage his great skill in knitting incidents from his life, the fantasies of a noctambulist, and the simplest generalizations of the human heart into one reality of life made passionate.

In an extract from his novel *Heddomeros*, included in this collection, Giorgio Di Chirico says: 'If I thought something had escaped my understanding, I shouldn't be able to sleep at night, yet people in general can see or hear or read things which mean nothing at all to them and still not worry in the least about it.' *People in general*, you note, but this whole book from the incident from Raymond Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique* to Ramon J. Sender's remarkable study in the psychic life of a buzzard, is intended for people not in general. Pitiful though it is, the very people whose life-blood pulses through such writings as this, the people in whose being lies titanic forces, age-old and future-looking, that is liberated into conscious life through the work of such men as Henry Miller, Paul Childs, and the rest, are the very people who will never read this book, nor understand it if it were read to them, nor lose five minutes sleep through puzzling about it. It is not a book for the twopenny libraries and will give no consolation to folks who think that creative writing ought to be concerned with rehashing the Waverley Novels. *A Night with Jupiter* is a book of our time with the result that ninety-nine people out of every hundred must inevitably accuse it of being ahead of its time. It recognizes that the way we live and think to-day is not the only way of thinking that we can live, in doing which it is much more a reflection of the real problems of to-day than most so-called contemporary fiction. Although the stories range through the whole realm of the imaginative fantasy, although they create strange heavens and explore ever newer hells, I am convinced that, together they form one of the most profoundly truthful books of to-day. Truth is reality and these writers are concerned with the aspect of reality which modern mass existence ignores; the reality of thought, of the oniric, of

the fears, hopes, and joyous life of the poetic imagination. One day, I expect, the Union Jack Pink Publishing Corporation will kindly produce all our literature for us, on which day we can cease to hope for any more books like this. Yet if we had more books like this now, read and understood by more *people in general*, the day of the Union Jack Pink Publishing Corporation might never dawn.

F. J. BROWN

SELF-CENSORSHIP IN THE AMERICAN CINEMA
FREEDOM OF THE MOVIES. RUTH INGLIS. University of
Chicago Press; and Cambridge University Press. 15s.

IN 1930 a Catholic priest called Father Daniel Lord, a worthy gentleman who had been connected with the motion picture industry in the capacity of technical adviser on the production of *The King of Kings* (a film based on the life of Christ), sat down and compiled what was later to become the Production Code of the American motion picture industry. Intended as a guide to Hollywood producers (from a strictly Catholic standpoint) as to what and what not to show on the screen, it consisted of a list of eleven things to be avoided and twenty-six subjects to be treated with special care.

The swift and sudden development of talking films resulted in the spotlight being turned temporarily from cinematic morals, or lack of them, but in 1934 the ubiquitous Father Lord bobbed up once more as one of the leading lights behind the Legion of Decency, a movement condemning vile and unwholesome pictures. This time his attempt to draw Hollywood's attention to its shortcomings was noticeably successful, and it is said that as many as nine million Catholics joined the Legion, pledging themselves to engage in the fight to safeguard the nation's morals. As one of the members in the battle to cleanse the screen, Father Lord announced that he had been conducting a personal examination of no less than 133 Hollywood films released between January and May, 1934. To a shocked, but none the less delighted, Press he announced his findings. These films contained :

26 plots or episodes built on illicit love.

13 plots or episodes based on seduction accomplished.

12 plots or episodes presenting seduction as attempted or planned.

And while two contained episodes on rape, one had the theme of an attempted incest.

As if these revelations were not enough the Catholic Father went on to announce that in the films examined 18 characters were living in adultery, seven characters were shown planning or attempting adultery, while three of the films had prostitutes as leading characters. In addition 25 of the films presented scenes and situations, dances, and dialogue of indecent or obscene or anti-moral character, while prostitutes as incidental characters occurred with disturbing frequency.

The American nation was apparently appalled by the publication of these facts, and after New York schoolchildren had paraded with banners declaring that 'an admission to an indecent movie is a ticket to Hell', the film industry, fearful of State intervention, decided to put its own house in order. To this end Martin Quigley, publisher of a leading film trade journal, and Joseph Breen, a young Catholic newspaperman, were appointed in charge of the administration of a Motion Picture Production Code, an extension of the one drafted by Lord; and an efficient method of enforcing the Code was instituted.

All producers were obliged to submit their product for examination by a central body, the head of which was Will Hays, former Postmaster-General of the U.S.A., and Chief of the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America since 1922. A resolution providing a 25,000 dollar penalty for producing, presenting, or exhibiting any picture without the production committee's code of approval was passed without opposition. Thus in 1934 the machinery for the control of motion picture content through self-regulation by the producers themselves was finally put into motion.

To-day everything one sees in American films abides by this Code. Kissing on the screen, shooting, murder, crime, questions of politics and trade unionism, miscegenation, love, lust, desire, all kinds of controversy—all these, for example, are handled in the cinema according to a rigid formula, while history must conform not to truth but to the edicts of the

Eric Johnston (formerly Will Hays) Office. Dr. Inglis' admirable book has skilfully analysed the development of the system by means of which motion picture industry now avoids all outside censorship, beginning with the story of the formation of the producers' organization, and continuing with the fascinating history of the now-notorious Production Code. She has probed beneath the surface and found a running sore, which is liable to be highly contagious.

As research assistant to the director of the Commission on Freedom of the Press, Dr. Inglis is well qualified to report on the film industry, since she also worked as assistant to the redoubtable Leo C. Rosten, of the Motion Picture Research Project (sponsored by the Carnegie and Rockefeller Institutions a few years ago). Disturbed by her findings while working with Rosten, Dr. Inglis prepared this special report, which sets out to examine the provisions of the Production Code in the light of the artistic and social responsibilities of the screen. Needless to say, the Code is found wanting.

The author emphasizes what many writers on films have been endeavouring to point out for years—namely that American motion picture makers are not—and never have been—specifically concerned with the effect of their product upon the millions of people who go to the movies every week of the year. Hollywood is interested only in the decrees of the 'two offices' (the Johnston and the box!) and all moves towards self-censorship are guided by the dictates of these two all-important institutions, and a fear of opposing such as the Legion of Decency, the Catholic Church, Big Business, the Republican Party, the Memphis Censor (who, in deference to Southern Negro-baiters, deletes all scenes showing coloured characters in any light other than servile), and what-have-you.

Inevitably, therefore, subjects of controversy are avoided, with some notable exceptions (e.g. the films of John Ford, Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, Edward Dmytryk, Robert Siodmak, William Wellman, and a few others). Due to the Code, the American screen has surrendered its vitality. Compared with the wartime British cinema or the post-war Continental film industries, Hollywood's output has become dehydrated

and ineffectual. Those seeking some explanation for the low standard of American films during the past few years will find much to interest them in *The Freedom of the Movies*. One can only conclude that rigid self-censorship has led to self-mutilation, and thus Hollywood has become a victim of its own peculiar forms of fetishism.

PETER NOBLE

I CANNOT GO HUNTING TO-MORROW. HENRY TREECE. Grey Walls Press. 8s. 6d.

THIS is the first volume of short stories by one who is already well known as a considerable poet and as an editor. Most of these have been published before, and have been read and appraised on their merits as stories, but the publication of this book sets them out, for the first time, as a corpus of work, a volume of interdependent and mutually ancillary studies. Like a volume of poems, one section of stories leads on to the next, and to the development of both in the third.

Five stories of *Children* give us the reportage of the curious memory, the ever-questing eye, and recreate for us bizarreries that were the mad world of adults impinging on the childish consciousness. The study may be as big as an adolescent alone with a homicidal lunatic or as small as a toddler overhearing the cook recite to herself all the things she would have liked to have told 'them in there!'; both are caught, interpreted.

Another five stories of *Fantasy* take us into the world of the liberated imagination; from the childish facts become fancies to the youthful fancies become facts. These stories range from the personal fears of nightmare to the universal dream of love and the creative impulse; the reportage of the inner eye.

Seven last stories are of *Situations*. Romantic, realistic, fear-ridden *Situations* that are told with the powers developed in the previous sections, they complete the pattern, and the pattern of *I Cannot go Hunting To-morrow* is of a poet's communiqués from our fear-ridden world. The hero of the title-story cannot go hunting to-morrow because of the nausea, physical, mental, and emotional which he felt 'in this village where men said one thing and did another'.

F. J. BROWN



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CROMPTON WAY. T. THOMPSON. Allen and Unwin. 8s. 6d.
MR. POWELL's competent first novel amply demonstrates that romance does not exist outside as a tangible quality, but is more within the eye of the onlooker. The Abruzzi area of Italy is about as romantic as a coal-scuttle; it is hard, rusty, and behind the times. But despite the fact that Mr. Powell affirms this, his attitude towards the mountains and swamps of the Abruzzi is that of an idealist and romantic; like Ouida before him he has fashioned a story of sugary consistency about a young man called Marco Fontana who falls in love with the faithless and sensation-adoring Camilla. Marco is a very intense young man who spends his time communing with his thoughts; by a river he loads the soft Italian air with such phrases as:

'We see ourselves going down stream and instead of being directors of our progress we are the witnesses of our downfall.'

Unhappy? Certainly: but as he says sententiously somewhere, he likes unhappiness, it is a part of him. Unhappiness, indeed, is his birthright; his 'espousal feast' with Camilla is a disaster, for that day she falls by the way; and sad and embittered, but still peculiarly untouched by his experience, Marco descends from the mountain village to the plain and joins the Navy. He wanders round Taranto in his uniform, picks up a girl called Rosalia, and finally goes away to sea to get involved in an engagement with the British Navy. Later a hospital ship he is on sinks; he floats in the sea for a short while until he is picked up, and he goes back to his village, to marry Camilla, apparently none the wiser for his adventures. The patient reader can ask himself in vain for the basic significance of this novel; there is a vague hint of solid earth in the title and the quotation from Benedetto Croce may provide a clue, and if none of these is enough there are the chunks of philosophic reflection in the main body of the narrative, but the final effect, unfortunately, is one of futility. This is a pity, for Mr. Powell has distinct ability. Perhaps the fault lies in the fact that he has sought to imagine himself, after a short stay with

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the Italians, into the lives and skins of people who have had no point of contact with his own experience. To avoid this, it is true, he takes his stance from a distance, but the effect nevertheless is foggy and unreal. In *Farewell to Arms*, Ernest Hemingway showed brilliantly how to handle similar material, but Mr. Powell preferred the method of Ignazio Silone in *Fontamara*; objectiveness without any of the satire and bite of the Italian author. And in the emotional relationship between his characters, Mr. Powell seems afraid to let himself go, so that instead of feeling what they feel, one gets an intellectualized report on their love sensations.

Mr. Thompson's novel is very different; his subject is not contemporary love and life, but the Lancashire cotton industry of the eighteenth century. We have already had Thomas Armstrong's *King Cotton*, and now Mr. Thompson gives us the story of Samuel Crompton who invented the spinning mule. It is very much as one remembered from the history books of our schooldays, and one suspects that in this portrait, as in the case of the schoolbooks, a good deal is conveniently by-passed. One can say what one likes about an age and a way of life, that one has never endured; there is no bitterness, no sorrow, no remembered pain to obscure one's view or intentions. The happy writer, indeed, can make of Samuel Crompton's early life a contented, witty time—as Mr. Thompson does. The main thing is to present as many facts as fully and as attractively as possible, and this Mr. Thompson does with considerable skill. He draws a credible picture of the riots which arose after the appearance of the machines which threw so many individual cotton spinners out of work, and he sketches in the background of the Industrial Revolution with quiet knowledge. Far be it for anyone to demand a 'true' picture of the period; few people could face the cruelty and suffering of that 'bloodless' transition period anyway, and if Mr. Thompson had made use of that material he would merely have been accused of being 'morbid'. As it is, the story of Samuel Crompton will give many readers the pleasant feeling of having reached an age of reason and progress, and as a brighter method of teaching history it is warmly recommended.

ROBIN KING



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THE ART OF THE FRENCH BOOK. Edited by Les Editions du Chêne. Elek. 45s.

'If you have two loaves, sell one and buy a bunch of narcissi,' is a Persian saying, and in like vein, if there is something you can do without, then forego obtaining it and, instead, buy this enchanting book because it is indeed a salve for the irk of the invading quotidian ugliness of things.

After the introduction by Philip James follows an article on manuscripts by Emile A. Van Moe. This is accompanied by twenty-nine pages of illustrations, three of which are coloured. The first is a moving *St. Mark* from the Gospel Book of Charlemagne (end of seventh century). The next is the brilliant picture styled: *Church of Ephesus* (between A.D. 1028 and A.D. 1072) from the *Apocalypse of Saint-Sever* (commentary by Beatus). The third shows a fourteenth century creation, a plate from the *Breviary d'Amor* of Maitre Ermengan. Our Lord, a winged lad wounded in hands and feet, dances amid the *Six Ages of the World* (He makes a seventh image).

The early fourteenth century terrifying picture of the Beast issuing from the Sea might illustrate a chapter from Jung on dreams emergent from the unconscious mind; the companion picture, *Allegory of the Fall of Babylon*, is equally evocative of thought. This splendid section of the book closes with a sixteenth century *Portrait of St. Louis* by Jean du Tillet.

The next article is entitled *The French Book* in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and is written by Robert Brun. The early books of the printing-press age figure here with engravings and woodcuts.

Now comes *The French Book in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, by Jacques Wilhelm. Here one must delight in the illustrations of Moreau le Jeune and in the coloured map of the *Pays du Tendre* (1654) where the Sea of Hostility, the Sea of Danger, the Unknown Lands, and the Lake of Indifference lie on the confines of the happy country where flow three rivers; one is the *River of Inclination*, another is called *Gratitude*, and another is the *River of Esteem*. Near the waters are raised the *City of New Friendships* and three other cities, each of which is called *Tenderness*. The hamlets of *Sensibility* and of *Great Service* are watered by the rivers, as are also

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those of *Billets Doux* and of *Jolis Vers*. The looming rock named *Pride*, crowned by a castle, rears its threatening bulk on the shore near to the *Adverse Sea*.

The nineteenth century French Book (1801-1870) is summed up by Paul-Henri Michel. Here are lovely woodcuts illustrating *Paul et Virginie* (by Bernadin de Saint Pierre). A fine etching by Manet illustrates the *Fleur Exotique* a sonnet by Armand Renaud. Here too, is the reproduction of an etching by Corot and drawings by Gustave Doré illustrating *Les Contes Drolatiques* by Balzac.

How admirable is the love of books in France! How admirable the joy taken in the production of books printed and illustrated for the gladness of the eye! How helpful to that cause are the various societies formed from time to time to further the publication of fine books!

The splendid volume under review draws to a close with an article on the French Book of the twentieth century. Here mind and eye are delighted by reproductions of lithographs by Toulouse-Lautrec and Pierre Bonnard, by the fine etchings of Pablo Picasso and of André Beaudin. Maillol and Rouault stir the imagination as does Picasso's great blazing bull which honours Baffon's *Histoire Naturelle*.

A short chapter on bookbinding by Robert Brun, author of the article on the fifteenth and sixteenth century book, and some pages of illustrations to this chapter bring the book—for the luxury of which one is so thankful—to its accomplished end.

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metics. Some of the receipts given are a little *Vogue-ish*, but on the whole Mrs. Leyel steers a nice course between the practical and the poetical. Her knowledge is enormous, enabling her to give not only the uses of herbs, but their history and the legends accruing to them. It is only a pity that a certain repetitiveness seems to have been inevitable, and that no hint of scale is given in the fifty drawings.

The Nature Notes collected by 'Julian' make light reading and bear rather too clearly the stamp of having been made to measured newspaper-space. Here and there, some interesting piece of lore is disclosed (some which even Mrs. Leyel has missed)—that southernwood is a moth preventive, that lime trees were planted in the Middle Ages wherever a battle had been fought—but, on the whole, the book is of the kind best left on the bed-table in a spare room or given as a birthday present to an aunt, who will certainly find it 'charming'.

LILIAN AINSWORTH

APOLOGY

Miss Barbara Cooper, reviewer in the January issue of Phyllis Bentley's *The Brontës*, has pointed out that the order of words in one of her sentences was altered, resulting in a split infinitive. The Editor apologizes deeply for this mistake, which occurred while he was abroad.

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EDITORIAL

March, 1948

SOON after its inception, under Mr. Desmond MacCarthy *Life and Letters* made, or contributed to, literary history by devoting the whole of one issue to a condensed version of the Welsh writer's, Richard Hughes, novel, *High Wind in Jamaica*. Twenty years or so later, I am now able to carry that departure a step further by printing chapters from a novel I have brought back from Jamaica and, as already announced, by following these next month with a number given over exclusively to writing from that vigorous island.

Richard Hughes's novel, despite its title, was set mainly elsewhere than in Jamaica and dealt with white people. Mr. Reid's deals with his own people, is set in his own country, and covers its history from the Morant Bay rebellion of 1865 down to the granting of the New Constitution in 1944. I have read *New Day*; it was the first thing that made me feel happy in Jamaica, for present tragedy and memory of past torture still haunt the Caribbean. We think, perhaps too readily, of Columbus and our own explorers adventurously reaching these islands; we forget the others, the thousands upon thousands, who were dragged to them. We speak of the New World, of the Land of Gold; we forget that for millions who came to these shores it was the Next World, a Hell set in the midst of Heaven, and that the only gold they knew was that of their own red spilt blood. The islands of the Caribbean are heavy with the evil of those long-lasting days of black man's agony and white man's shame. The black man's body could be broken, or nearly; his spirit never was. Unlike the Indian, faced with oppression, he never became resigned, never gave up the will to live. There can be few races who have resisted and survived and come through so much cruelty and oppression as has the African. The reasons lie in the virtues of courage, loyalty to each other, kindness and what is apt to result from these three—a vigorous cheerfulness. It is this vigour which

you can find to-day, and where I first found it was in Mr. Reid's book. The only recommendation I will give it is that it needs none from me. The chapters I chose offer, I hope, some idea of his quality, and they do form a sequence. But I would say that the book carries one with it from the very first page and this despite what might seem at first sight the difficulty of its Jamaican English. Readers will find this more easy if they come to it with a few notes of explanation, such as the author himself gave to me.

A typical sentence is 'Is remember I remember one August month when rain was a-drown the earth'. Here you have the characteristic repetition, whose purpose is to emphasize—'is remember I remember'. Its effect is also to give rhythm, and I myself found this rhythm much easier to appreciate when I considered the effect which, in turn, the Welsh settlers, and in particular the Welsh missionaries, had on the island. There are many Welsh names in Jamaica, both of people and of place, and many of the turns of speech to this day are Welsh. This is particularly true of the order of words in a sentence, which to merely English ears and eyes must often seem inverted. One need only take the frequent interjection, 'what it is at all,' and know that it stands for 'what is it' to recognize the typical Welsh way of putting a question.

Much old English remains, due to the comparative isolation of some communities and the difficulty of transport until lately. Readers, advised of this, will find their own instances. I here will give only one—that the suffix '-ing' is not much used, its place being taken by the prefix 'a-', so that 'walking' becomes 'a-walk'—as in such English words still commonly used such as 'afloat' and 'afloat'.

The quality of Mr. Reid's prose speaks for itself and so does the skill with which he handles the several layers of personality of his main character, as an old man, being again a boy and a young man, recounting past days whilst living through new ones. The flash-back technique can be boring, but in Mr. Reid's hands it becomes a means of maintaining our interest on several planes at once.

I have printed these chapters separately, because they stand on their own, which is their particular merit. A more general

one is that, the book being historical, they provide a background against which next month's Jamaican number can be usefully seen. It should be remembered, however, that the rebellion of which they treat was not an isolated uprising. The Spaniards had killed most of the original inhabitants. To work the sugar which Columbus had introduced, the British brought over slaves from Africa—admittedly, often from African slave-markets, where captives were sold by their African conquerors. The descendants of these and their white slave-drivers are the people who now inhabit Jamaica, the people to whom Jamaica belongs. To the glory of the black side of the population, Jamaica had no less than twenty-nine important slave rebellions in one hundred and fifty years (*Democracy and Empire in the Caribbean*, Blanshard, Macmillan, New York, 1947). The leader of the Morant Bay Rebellion, George William Gordon, of whom Mr. Reid writes, was hanged. But in 1945, the prize in a Jamaica drama-competition for local authors was given to a play centring round Gordon. The author received the prize while he was in prison, serving a six-month sentence for writing an attack on Britain . . . There are, indeed, signs of a 'New Day'; as equally, there is crying need for one.

Particulars of next month's issue will be found on the inside back cover. Some of the contributions will be in dialect, others in modern English. Some deal with obeah and country-life. Others with modern matters and the educated classes. A visitor cannot hope, and therefore will not be expected, to produce an issue giving anything but a limited idea of the complexity of Jamaica's problems to-day. But I was guided in my selections by the fact that, as an outsider, I knew it was necessary to give not only a hearing to the voice of to-day, but some idea of the background against which that voice is making itself heard.

How this background strikes a white person is recorded, to my intense pleasure, by Phyllis Bottome, who apart from myself will be the only white writer in the issue. Miss Bottome spent five months in the island last year and for her sympathy, interest, and deep knowledge of the problems to be tackled, left behind her an impression as glowing as the land itself.

NOVELS

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON

LET us leave it to the reviewers to abuse such effusions of fancy at their leisure and over every new novel to talk in threadbare strains of the trash with which the press now groans. Let us not desert one another: we are an injured body. Although our productions have afforded more extensive and unaffected pleasure than those of any other literary corporation in the world, no species of composition has been so much decried. From pride, ignorance, or fashion, our foes are almost as many as our readers; and while the abilities of the nine-hundredth abridger of the History of England, or of the man who collects and publishes in a volume some dozen lines of Milton, Pope, and Prior, with a paper from the *Spectator*, and a chapter from Sterne, are eulogized by a thousand pens, there seems almost a general wish of decrying the capacity and undervaluing the labour of the novelist, and of slighting the performances which have only genius, wit, and taste to recommend them. "I am no novel-reader—I seldom look into novels—do not imagine that I often read novels—it is really very well for a novel!" Such is the common cant. "And what are you reading Miss ——?" "Oh!, it is only a novel!" replies the young lady, while she lays down her book with affected indifference or momentary shame. "It is only *Cecilia*, or *Camilla*, or *Belinda*," or in short, only some work in which the creative powers of the mind are displayed, in which the most thorough knowledge of human nature, the happiest delineation of its varieties, the liveliest effusion of wit and humour are conveyed to the world in the best chosen language. Now, had the young lady been engaged with a volume of the *Spectator*, instead of such a work, how proudly she would have produced the book and told its name!

Encountering in *Northanger Abbey*—Jane Austen's sly dig at the contemporary thriller—this impassioned defence of the novel, one is moved to wonder whether, could she come

among us to-day, she might presently be found defending its characteristic fiction, the detective novel, and might substitute in the case of a reader discovered immersed in a Sayers or an Innes, for 'a volume of the *Spectator*', a novel by Proust, Joyce, or Virginia Woolf?

For assuredly, turning at last from the clamour of her astonishing surroundings to the quietude of the printed page, Jane would come in due course upon these pioneers; would wander bewildered through a chapter of Proust (are not then the French writers any longer explicit, direct, and clear?), glissade incredulously down a page or two of *Finnegan's Wake* (this Mr. Joyce is after all an Irishman), seek in *The Waves* for the emergence of recognizable narrative and at last, hoping for a clue to the novel's extraordinary metamorphosis, would take refuge with the essayists. Only to find 'composure' (for her the prerequisite of all the virtues, and for whose recovery, whenever life produced emotional disturbance, the liveliest of her heroines is always prepared to pay the price of half an hour's quiet reflection in her own room), already severely shaken, fly off beyond recapture before the assaults of an amazing discovery. For here, amongst the names of giants appearing in steady succession ever since her own day and whose works have given to fiction its present status, stands her own name. Not only considered worthy—even by appreciative assessors of the strange new varieties—of mention among the elect of the long series, but set by certain critics in lofty isolation above them all. Set gravely; respectfully; even affectionately: 'dear Jane.'

Sooner or later she would inevitably encounter the label supplied by the critics for the group of novels so deeply bewildering her: *The Stream of Consciousness*, and might possibly discover its origin: the borrowing, for the purpose of summarizing the work of a writer she found both novel and interesting, by Miss May Sinclair from the epistemologists, of this more than lamentably ill-chosen metaphor, long since by them discarded but still, in literary criticism, pursuing its foolish way.

Sure, we may feel, that no authority of whatever eminence, would succeed in persuading her to regard consciousness as

a stream; nor, it may be, would any amount of trumpet-blowing send her back for further investigation of the alleged waters, at any rate until she had pursued her investigations as far as the present moment. As far as these stories pouring from the press in ever-increasing numbers and eagerly read, she learns, by gentle and simple alike, albeit many of the former, like the young lady reading a mere novel, acknowledge their addiction a little shamefacedly. Selections made for her by an experienced guide turn out to be novels indeed: 'performances which have genius, wit, and taste to recommend them.' Terrible, they are. Each one a revelation of human depravity. Yet in none of them is there any conscious employment, *exploitation* as these moderns appear to call it, of horror for the sake of horror. And, indeed, from the writer's point of view, the power of the ever-present shadow of evil to throw into relief and pin into the memory every incident in the story is most remarkable—akin to the deep shadows in the pictures of that Dutch artist, Mr. Rembrandt. And women no less than men excel in the writing of these strange tales, even so, my guide tells me, outdo them on account of the capacity for imaginative sympathy and vicarious living that enables them to bring their characters to life as persons rather than as types, so that in reading their stories one suffers enlargement of one's personal experience. Wealth of enlightenment, too, is to be reaped as to to-day's changed opinions in regard to matters one had believed settled for ever in the minds of all right-thinking persons, and in regard also to every aspect of this strange new world, wide general knowledge and, what is surely more important and valuable, insight into human problems making some of these books, without endangering their quality as enthralling stories, admirable essays in social, political, and even religious criticism.

Yes, indeed, dear Jane, in absorbing a selection of to-day's detective stories you have experienced invaluable conducted tours.

And is not every novel a conducted tour? First and foremost into the personality of the author who, willy-nilly, and whatever be his method of approach, must present the reader with the writer's self-portrait. He may face his audience after the

manner of a lecturer, tell his tale, interpolate the requisite information, descriptions, explanations; or, walking at his side, letting the tale tell itself, come forward now and again to make a comment or drive home a point; or, remaining out of sight and hearing may, so to speak, project his material upon a screen. In either case he will reveal whether directly or by implication, his tastes, his prejudices, and his philosophy. And thus it is, the revealed personality of the writer that ultimately attracts or repels. An unchallenged masterpiece, a miracle of collaboration between genius and talent, will be explored as it makes its way down the centuries, by generation after generation of entranced tourists, even by those in utmost revolt against the vision of the conductor; but, for these last, will never gain the wholehearted allegiance secured by conductors whose personality, while breaking none of the bonds of artistic orthodoxy, carries the tourist far beyond the selected bounds. And, indeed, in the interest of such vital company, even violations of the dogmas of artistic orthodoxy will either remain unnoticed or, if they are perceived, will be readily condoned.

This conviction implies, however, no sort of agreement with readers who scorn all novels save those that are either openly or inferentially social, moral, or religious treatises. Yet on behalf of these humanists and moralists one may allow their prejudices to be firmly grounded upon a half-conscious critical awareness of the vast discrepancy between the actuality of life as experienced and the dramatic fatalism, shared in spite of its relative freedom from the time-limit, by the orthodox novel with the stage; the way, akin to that of science, it must not only lift its selected material from the context of reality but what is even more decisively restrictive, must ignore, in order to supply a story complete with beginning, middle, climax, and curtain, the always unique modifications of contingency.

However we elect to regard 'the novel', whether with the eyes of the high-priest we consider it as predestined to remain within a framework for ever established or, with the prophet, see its free development implied from the beginning, the novel will remain a tour of the mind of the author, the decisive factor his attitude towards phenomena. He may be what is

called 'romantic', inclined on the whole to concentrate on qualities and ignore defects, or 'realist', deliberately, by way of corrective, emphasizing defects; so that in a sense the two, like the twins known as optimist and pessimist, cancel each other out. Either of these again may be a poet, his work signed all over. To-day there are novels wherein the interest of any single part is no longer dependent for the reader upon exact knowledge of what has gone before or upon a frothy excitement (a prime source of the moralist's condemnation) as to what next will happen. Such novels may be entered at any point, read backwards, or from the centre to either extremity and will yet reveal, like a mosaic, the interdependence of the several parts, each one bearing the stamp of the author's consciousness.

And all the variously branching diversities of the novel of to-day, the humanist novel, tending to drama in a resounding box, the psychological novel tending, in concentration upon the intimate trickeries of the mind, to fatalistic exploitation of unconscious motive, the secular novel, whether constructively or destructively critical, and the religious novel, whether symbolic, denominational, or expressive of the mystical awareness potential in every man, are to be found in the ranks of detective fiction. And every detective novel, like every other novel, remains a tour guide and tourist, whether congenial or at variance, engaged in a collaboration whose outcome is immeasurable.

CHAPTERS 'FROM 'NEW DAY'

A Novel of Jamaica

BY V. S. REID

[**N**EW DAY is the story of a family living through three generations of Jamaican history, from the closing of one day in 1865 to the beginning of another day in 1944. In 1865 came the Morant Bay rebellion and in consequence the change of the Island's Representative Constitution to that of Crown government. In 1944, following years of agitation often accompanied by bloodshed, the colony was granted a new constitution which provided for partial self-government.

The story is told on the eve of Constitution Day, 20th November, 1944, by John Campbell, oldest living member of the Morant Bay Campbells, who as a child in 1865 had seen the British redcoats and their native Maroon allies run amok in an orgy of murder and arson that in less than a week left a toll of 1,000 dead and wounded. In that awful week, he saw his father and a brother slain, and his mother die of the shock. With another brother, Davie, who was one of the rebels that 'marched with Paul Bogle', the rebel leader, young John flees to a small Cay off the Morant coast.

He tells of his life on the Cay with his brother and his brother's wife, a Haytian girl named Lucille Dubois, his return to Jamaica, and the part his family played in the long climb back to the new day.

This excerpt tells of the scene in the Morant parish church on the Sunday before the rebellion, the arrest of his brother Davie, and his receiving of the commission from his brother to go to Stoney Gut, the rebel headquarters, there to acquaint Bogle with the happenings.—
V. S. R.]

Every third Sunday there is Church Parade at Morant Bay. Every third Sunday-day, Missis Queen's militiamen put on scarlet and blue to march past Custos Aldenburg.

We family turn into the Square fronting the church just as town clock is a-talk the threequarters. Militiamen ha' not left

the Fort yet, so Father says we will stand and wait and watch for Missis Queen's men.

Enough-plenty people are watching for them too. We stand under a big cottontree fronting the gate, being nice to watch the carriages of the planters a-drive up to the church. Shiny horses there, a-draw four-in-hand with the negro coachmen sitting straight up on the box. Coachmen wear beaver hats like my father's, with blue ribbons flashing from their whips.

Many pretty women step out o' the carriages, a-lift their crinolines high. Davie says is not needful this, but they want to show poor people how much silks wrap *buckra* women from the world. The crowd do no' make any sound; before time, cheer, they would cheer.

Is thick dust there on the road, and they must step three times before they reach the carpet what takes them into the church. Poor people do no' use the door where carpet is, but use the back door where baptismal font is. Ruthie says, is not the rule that, but poor people feet are 'shamed to walk on rich carpet since they ha' no' got any boots on.

My father is a-stand with his head high in the air. I see there are enough-plenty planters who know my father, for every now and again, he touches his beaver hat and the gentlemen bow and smile. That time, Davie, who is a-stand beside o' me says something in his throat—

Eh, eh, not in his throat, but in his belly, and to me it sounds like butcher's dog at Morant Bay market what can get no scrap meat.

But all of a sudden there is noise from the people who stand topside the Square. Hold on to Davie's hand, me, and lean over so I can see up the road without falling.

Two white soldiers come prancing on high horses. Sun is laughing with the spike-and-chain on brass helmets, wi' swords and many buttons on the bright scarlet coats. Knee boots shine so, until you can see your face in at them. Back o' the soldiers is a great scarlet coach with two other soldiers a-ride postillion and box. Nobody ha' to tell me is Custos Aldenburg's, this.

Then, now. People begin a-boo and a-catcall, but soldier-men do no' look right or left. The coach pulls up before we

gate and the soldier on the box jumps down and opens the door.

I do not know if it is true it, but Ruthie says Von Akdenburg's face is always red 'cause he eats raw meat. This morning, red and wet-wet is his face.

Custos is a fat man, with heavy belly folding over his waistband and cheeks to match his belly. This day, his robe of office he is wearing, scarlet open-gown, hat like Admiral's at Port Royal and grand gold chain a-loop around his neck. October sun is shining warm on us, but there is no warmth in his *ackee pod* eyes which are going all over we people.

When they come to my father, a nod from his head me father gets. Father took off his beaver hat and bowed, while me mother swept a curtsy. But when Custos looked on my bro' Davie, Custos' mouth corners went to hide in the slack o' his jowls. Then Custos stepped down in the road and turned back to his coach door. I looked up at Davie and saw that his eyes were gone to bed and no' looking at anything at all.

All this time, 'cept for a little hissing from the back of the crowd, there is quiet on we people, for Custos' eyes are on them and it is no' good to anger him for you might soon ha' to face him on the Bench—and woe betide you!

Then all of a sudden people start pushing for the front.

CHAPTER 8

An old man now, me. Many years are a-bank the flame that was John Campbell. And down the passage o' them years, many doors ha' opened. Some of them ha' let in rich barbecues o' joyousness, with good things covering the bottom of the pot o' life, and ha' no thorns there for give you pain. Others have opened into butteries of hell, and me soul ha' been scarred with the fires.

But even now, when is old I am old, no door ever opened what bring both joy and pain like the door which let in Lucille Dubois.

Listen me. Remember I remember one August month when rain was a-drown the earth. For two weeks, is no sun

there a-shine. Black is the morning, black is the evening, and Mas'r God's heaven does no' look on us at all. *Yallahs* and *Morant* and *Plantain Garden* rivers heavy so, 'til you do no' know where the river ends and the land begins. Is the time that, when an alligator swam clear up to the negro barracks and took away my friend Timothy's baby bro'.

Then there was dirging down at the negro barracks. Day in, night out, you heard it through the rain, a-mark time with the drip, drip, drip of *guinea* and *mango* trees, weeping.

For two weeks, we ha' not come out of the house 'cept to the kitchen and dry our osnaburg at smoky damp-wood fire. Is miserable it, and mud a-clog your toes outside while damp a-creep into your bones inside and you sleep on sodden kitty-up at nights.

Then one morning, when day-cloud was a-peep, woke, I woke and did no' hear the rain. Creep out o' my kitty-up and go to the door and pull the latch-wood—*Wayah!*

Look there! Is no' Mas'r God's heaven that a-look down on me?

Blue and clean it is, O! Mas'r God has washed His Face, and His Right Hand is a-come out o' the bay with a red poincianna 'twixt His Fingers!

There is a wind a-come off the water, pushing staleness out of you, and you choke on the goodness that is coming into you so, 'til your heart pumps and pumps and you must open your arms wide and feed on the breast o' the new day.

Is so it, when I first see Lucille, but I did no' know her then.

All I know say that there is such a beauty before me eyes that I never seen before.

Nobody had to tell me say is a new visitor to our parish, this lady, for townspeople are craning their necks to see her face as she steps from Aldenburg's coach. And all through the crowd, you hear them ask of one another: '*Is who this? Is who this? This new face comes from where?*'

'Member I remember how I stood, a-look on her hair, on her eyes, and a-say to myself, me: 'Johnny O, is summer moon it, shining on Maroon Hole, and silver lights are a-twinkle at the bottom o' dark waters.'

And then I saw that her eyes were resting on Davie. My bro' Davie it is, I know, for I see her a-look long over my head, and when I turn and look too I see is Davie there. My bro' Davie is looking back on Lucille Dubois like say other people are not there at all at all.

Watch them, Johnny O! Stallion eagerness is a-ripple Davie's flank against my shoulder. The sun has brought silver to the black o' Lucille's hair, her lips are a-suck at a *blood plum* that is no' there.

Not for long did they stand there with their eyes a-make four with each other, for I remember that I did no' draw breath—me, who can no' dive from bank to bank at Maroon Hole without kicking for water-top. So, it must ha' been less than half of a minute when Custos saw that say something funny was going on there. He turned and looked on my bro', Davie. The blood made his raw meat face redder, and hear him with sharpness: 'Goom, Miss Lucille!'

Soldiermen's swords flashed in salute as Custos stepped for the carpet with Miss Lucille at his side. They must pass near—near where we family is a-stand, so Father tells us, low, that we must move back and give Custos room. All o' we move back, 'cept Davie.

Custos and his lady are stepping for the carpet when all of a sudden she stumbled forward. Know, I know that her feet must have caught on the edge, for she was a-look on Davie and did not see that the carpet was so near. I am looking to see Davie reach forward and help her, for poor pot-belly Custos can no move fast enough. But me bro' does no' do anything, and 'most she would be flat on the ground. Is Father and Manuel it, who must reach quicker than you can say *Jack Mandora* and stop her from falling. Mother said: 'Poor Missie!' and went down to arrange her skirt. Miss Lucille touched her hair little places and said *thankie* to my mother with a smile. But there was wonder and hurt when she looked on Davie.

And Davie? Well, then. He is a-look like she is not there, just like say nothing happened there!

Custos was looking on Miss Lucille as if he would like to put trace-leather on her, 'specially when people around the

Square burst into little titters, but all he did was make a noise in his throat and step off up the carpet.

I am a-think say is bad it, to face Custos on the Bench to-morrow.

Before Pastor Humphrey begins his sermon, there is reading o' *Queen's Advice*. I believe he knows it by heart, for most of the time while he should be reading, his eyes are a-walk all over the church where poor people sit.

Pastor, tall and pale like conger-eel and for mouth he has got rat-trap. Every sentence Pastor finishes, mouth shuts tight—*ram!* Then he looks around some more, fish eyes a-stare at we people.

This Sunday-day, Pastor says his text comes from Saint Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. I am a-sit 'twixt Naomi and Davie and I felt when Davie's body went tight. I look on him and see say his eyes are closed.

Hear Pastor Humphrey: 'Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ.'

Father sits with his head held high, beaver hat on his knees. Ma Tamah is beside o' him, and when Pastor read, I saw her nod; and there is a curve on her mouth like say she says *Amen*. That is how my mother stay.

Everytime everybody read from the Book my mother always makes the *Amen*. Like say she is a-tell them that they should no' forget the *Amen*.

Pastor Humphrey closed the Book and leaned far over his pulpit, fish eyes a-search of we people.

Hear him, slow: '*Servants, be obedient.*'

CHAPTER 9

Whenever we go to church, Naomi and me sit side-and-side. First time when we sit down, we open our knees wide. When sermon times comes, we close our knees tight, and then is a good space there for crab-race.

You know how you play crab-race?

Down on the beach where the mangrove bushes are which

never wet feet but at high tide, you find the hole o' the little brown deaf-ears land-crab. Is easy it, to catch them, for they can no' hear you 'til you are there right down on them.

Every Sunday morning before church time, Naomi and me get plantain-trash and go down the beach for our deaf-ears. We strip plantain-trash down to strings and tie i' on their feet and then place them in Naomi's head-kerchief. Tied, they must be tied good, for the 'kerchief will go into Naomi's bosom, and it is hell-and-powderhouse if they get away in there.

Sermon time comes, and out come bro' deaf-ears. Then there is Naomi on one string, me ont'other, and we are a-race them on the bench 'twixt us. Father does no' see, for his head does no' turn from the pulpit after we sit in our pew. Ma Tamah never sees, for, sleep she is asleep soon after Notices.

So, to-day, when Pastor closes the Book and says we must be obedient, I can feel Naomi a-draw away from me and I know say she is ready for we crab-race.

'When Saint Paul in his Epistle called upon the people of Ephesus to be obedient to their masters, he was writing both as an Apostle of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and as a man of the world who had held office over men, and knew the wisdom of a civilized submission to Authority.'

That is how Pastor Humphrey begins his sermon this Sunday-day in Morant Bay parish church. Mouth comes down *snap* on *Authority*, and long neck shoots out and draws back into cassock like Iguana at stone-hole. Mother said *Amen*, and when I looked at her, her eyes were just a-close. I know say she is asleep now.

But there is another sound back o' me what sounds like somebody had groaned deep, and I look back. Church cram full, with people standing around the Font and men outside a-peep through the windows. Negroes and mulattos and many barefeet German whites from Seaforth Town have come to listen Pastor Humphrey.

Father is a-sit straight up, his eyes fixed on the pulpit. But my bro' Davie? His eyes are closed tight, and only the

ridge which comes and goes on his cheek tells you that my bro' is no' sleep. Naomi is poking me in my side to say this is time for crab-race. But I do not notice her, for Naomi fool-fool, for she does not understand that something is a-happen in Morant Bay to-day-day.

For when I did turn my head, saw I saw many Stoney Gut men a-stand outside church windows.

Now, then. Every Sabbath-day, there are big *mets* at Stoney Gut when Deacon Bogle preaches to his people. Since day cloud broke, they are trudging into the Gut from Morant Bay, Yallahs, Bath Town. There are big mountain-men coming up through Cuna Cuna Pass from the Rio Grande Valley. There are sugar-boatmen a-come in wains on the Windward Road from Morant Point. Enough-plenty men go to Stoney Gut every Sabbath-day.

And that time, Deacon Bogle's big *met* pots taik all day with juniper wood flame; that time, wild hogs turn on spit all day to feed hungry men. Then how come to-day that so many o' Deacon's men are at Morant Bay?

I touched my bro' Davie on his arm and whispered say there are many Stoney Gut men at church to-day. Davie does no' open his eyes, but forms his mouth like say *Shut up*.

Well, then, make Stoney Gut men stay. Davie says shut up. A-listen to Pastor Humphrey, me.

'Over a quarter of a century ago, our Good Queen Victoria in her great wisdom gave freedom to her darker children of Africa. Men, there were, who questioned the wisdom of that gift and asked whether people who were clearly unfit for responsibility should be made citizens, holding in common with all, the wonderful and inestimable privilege of being freedmen of the British Empire. How has it worked out?'

Rat-trap shuts tight. Iguana neck pulls in, pulls out.

'We pastors, whatever our failings, have never but preached the Word of God to the people. We have taught that the good Christian should be humble in the presence of those set in authority. We have taught that men must eat by the sweat of their brows; that in work, and only in hard work, lies the redemption of a race which for centuries have lived in sin and

savagery before Almighty God. And, by our efforts, the whip and the crank and the treadmill have been set aside and the opportunity of freedom offered. What do we now find?

Pastor is a-tug at the collar of his cassock and is a-bob his head out and in.

There is a wind outside, wind a-talk soft with the old cotton tree. There is a good smell o' leather and sweat from militia men in the front pews. I can see Judge Shortridge a-sit with other *bucks* a English near to Custos' pew. Morning sun is shining through the window down on his bald head like on a crown piece lying in the road. Wish, I am wishing that I had me slingshot for Judge Shortridge's head. Naomi can bother with me no longer, so she one is racing two crabs.

Why Davie will no' make his eyes four with Miss Lucille's?

Hear Pastor. 'What do we find? Because Almighty God has seen fit to visit His Wrath on these people for their laziness and hardness of heart, because He has seen fit to seal off from their land the rains of heaven for these three years, they have rebelled against His ordinance and seek to supplant those whom He has set in authority over them.'

Groan from back o' the church again, and this time, nobody ha' to tell me say that it comes from Stoney Gut men.

'Yes!' Is loudness there in Pastor's voice now, and Iguana is a-bob more than ever. 'Yes! Not many miles from here, a black Satan in human form is preaching Sedition against the person of our Most Gracious Queen!'

Cho man! Know, I know say he means Paul Bogle!

'In Kingston, a man who holds office in the Honourable Legislature of this Colony, moving in the best circles of society, the society he has sworn to protect, a leader of the people, preaches Sedition against Her Majesty!'

Well! If is no' Mr. Gordon that, then is who it?

This time, there is a louder groan from back of we and I see Pastor look up sharp. Davie, too, opens his eyes, and there is frighten in the jerk of his head as he looks around. I see old Mr. Amos, the beagle, get up from his bench near the door and go outside, his gown a-flap back of him like *John Crow* homing in north wind.

Soon, there was tramping in the churchyard and I see white

helmets bobbing past the windows as constables begin moving Stoney Gut men from the windows. Everybody are a-crane their necks now. Naomi and me are climbing to the bench when Father said something sharp. There is vex in his voice. We sit down quick.

There are people a-scuffle outside. Someone calls out and is sound of a blow, there. I feel Davie stirring beside me, but Sammy, who is a-sit t'other side of him, whisper in his ears. More white helmets bob pass the church windows. Then after that there is quiet, but Stoney Gut men are no' at the windows.

Pastor Humphrey stands tall in his pulpit, no fulness to his lips, dark glass marbles for his eyes.

Hear him: 'And now, they would bring their perdition to the House of God? They would bring their seditious practices to the doors of the Church Established by the Grace of God and Her Majesty?'

Pastor leans over his pulpit, a-rub the stone with his palm. Now, then, there is cooing in his voice, pigeon a-coo in his voice, but yellow snake a-look out of his eyes. His palm rubs easy-easy, back and forth. Softly, he talks to we.

'Saint Paul was a man of the world. He knew what terrible punishment could be inflicted on those who did not submit to Constituted Authority. He himself had once been an instrument of this authority. He knew that rightly or wrongly, such authority had the power to flay, or even slay the malingerer. So, he said, "Servants, be obedient . . . with fear and trembling in singleness of your heart as unto Christ." '

Then he is a-look down his nose at we. 'Let the malingerer beware the might of Constituted Authority!'

And so, finished, he is finished and is turning to the east window to say the closing dedication. And I am a-look as I always do for see Mother open her eyes as she always do.

'Let us pray for rain,' says Pastor Humphrey.

CHAPTER 10

After service, Custos Baron Aldenburg and Judge Shortridge will take salute from militiamen on parade ground at the Fort. When we ha' come outside the church, we will all go

under cotton tree to meet we friendly families. We will meet to tell howdy. Every Sabbath day after services, tell we tell one another howdy under the cotton tree.

This day when we go outside, the family of Bro' Zaccy O'Gilvie is the one we meet first. Bro' Zaccy is head butcher o' Morant Bay, and a Vestryman. Davie says he is the greatest black Imperialist. I do no' know if is cuss word, that, but Davie spits when he says Imperialist and you only spit when you say cuss word.

All the same, I do not like Bro' Zaccy. Because o' his belt and buckle why I do no' like Bro' Zaccy. Black and crusty is the leather o' his thick belt with a great brass buckle what shapes like wild boar's head. I am a-think that such a belt on me behind will make fire come to my eyes. And whenever time we meet Bro' Zaccy and he is shaking my hand, my eyes only reach as high as his belt and I smell the stinking leather.

But, Imperialist? My bro' Davie says that Zaccy does no' drink mint tea any longer. Says you couldn't boil fresh cut *ceroose* in coconut milk and sweeten it with new sugar enough to tempt him. Only China and Indian tea Zaccy drinks now, and is more English than Lord Derby.

Bro' Zaccy says: 'Mawnin', Bro' John, mawnin' Ma Tamah, mawnin' all *pickney*.'

All o' we say morning. He is a-wear his black alpaca suit with the heavy silver chain riding his stomach. His family are Ma Mary and Hannah and Ebenezer. Hannah is Ruthie's size, so she just nods at me and I go over to Ebenezer. I hear Bro' Zaccy laugh at something and silver chain gallops over his stomach.

Ebenezer is eight like me. He shows me a green glass marble with a nick on top. Naomi says *cho*, and I say *cho*, for is nick on top there, and not so good. Naomi gives me her headkerchief with the two deaf-ears crabs and Ebenezer's eyes get shine. Ebenezer's family live at Braco Hill where they have no mangrove crabs. He says alright, he will take them. I get the green glass marble with the nick on top.

'Bad business in church to-day, Bro' John Campbell,' says Zaccy.

Father nods his head. Hear him: 'I get invitation to-day, Zaccy.'

'Invitation? Who from?'

Father tells him about Bro' Aaron. Zaccy shakes his head and silver chain canter on his stomach.

'Is now it that Aaron finds his mistake, no?'

'Hope, I am a-hope so, Bro' Zaccy,' says my father.

Militiamen are coming from the church to form in Square and march off to the Fort. Sammy is a-mad to follow the crowd which is running to the parade-ground, but Father is no' ready yet. *Buckra* planters have driven off to the Fort in their carriages. After militiamen march off, Father will lead we family a-march behind militiamen. There will be other families too with us. Ruthie one time told me that we do this because we are better class family who ha' got no carriage, but who can no' run before militiamen with street arabs. So, we will march behind militiamen, Father a-lead us with head high.

'I hear say they will call out more men for the Fort, John,' said Bro' Zaccy.

Father nodded, with dark-night a-settle down on his face.

More families are a-come to the cotton tree now, and we are a-say howdy-do to them. As they come, Zaccy rubs his hand over his watch chain and says: 'Bad business in church to-day, bro'.'

There is Bro' Hezekiah James leading Ma Lucy and their fourteen *pickney*. Hezekiah is the biggest blacksmith in Morant Bay and is a great sport, he. One gold tooth fronts his mouth. I am a-think say how his mouth favours his smithy, for every time he laughs, you see fire in the blackness of his face. Great sport, he, laughing enough-plenty and looking on my sister Ruthie. Ruthie makes monkey-faces at him. Davie says Bro' Heze only stopped breeding Ma Lucy 'cause he could no' find names for the *pickney*. But my bro' was two-mouthed that time, for I afterwards hear him tell young men at Morant Bay market that Ma Lucy keeps flat 'cause she turns her back at nights.

Then see Bro' Hans Schmidt there, a-come with his bare-foot family. Bro' Hans is a poor hunchback German potter

with eyes always hiding from the sun. Every third Saturday-day, they come to Morant Bay to sell clay pots. After market, they sleep under barbecue until Sabbath morning. Hans does no' ha' farthing for collection plate, so he always brings water jar or flower pot for collection. A long time now, since Manuel was a baby, he has been coming with clay collection until Humphrey's church and Great House are filled with jars and flower pots.

But after barracks people start a-talk saying that Pastor wants the clay collection to hold the tears of poor black people, stop, Pastor stopped him from bringing more. So now, only on Harvest Festival do they bring a large Spanish jar.

Bro' Hans and his family say morning to we, but they talk like say bullfrogs are a-jump in their throats—same like Custos Aldenburg. I went quick behind Ruthie's skirt—but, *cho* man, Ma Sara Schmidt has seen me long time, and is up in her two arms what favour sugarboat derrick, me.

What makes her stay so? Must be because there are six in her family and all of them *girl pickney*.

Naomi is talking to the six o' them now, and is a-show them the blue drawers what Mother has edged with the lace from her old petticoat. So my sister Naomi boastie, though!

Zaccy rubbed his hand on his chain and said: 'Bad business to-day, Bro' Hans.'

'Iz drue it, Zaccy. Dree o' them ha' been arrez't' and in lock-up now.'

Manuel was talking to Hannah O'Gilvie, but now he turned to Hans. Spoon talk, Manuel was making with Hannah; for she laughed all the time and peeped at Manuel though she formed like she was watching grass a-grow. Is so it, when Ruthie talks to Moses Dacre down by the stand pipe at Morant Bay market. Thirsty, Ruthie's thirsty every minute on Saturday-day, and must leave we to go to the stand pipe. That time, Naomi and me laugh to ourselves, for Father and Mother fool-fool.

But hear Manuel now: 'Arrested, you said, Bro' Hans?'

'Eh, eh, yez. Gonstables arrez't dree o' them.'

All of a sudden, Father looked around on us. 'Where is Davie?' he asked.

We look all around too, and there is not a Davie in the churchyard. Sammy looked on me, I looked on Sammy.

'Is where that boy!' calls Father, voice loud with thunder, leader buil a-look down on his herd. Mother ran quickly to the fence and looked into the Square where the militia were getting ready for the march.

'Davie O! Davie! Davie Campbell O!' she is a-call.

Bro' Zaccy shook his head so his watch chain cantered. 'Is a wayward boy that, John, he will bring bad to your grey head.'

'Davie O!' Mother is a-call, her eyes walking through the Square.

But there is boom from big drum and chatter from side drums and pipes are a-skirl as militiamen march off.

Father is a-breath heavily, vex in his eyes. His fingers go down the seven brass buttons, his eyes making four with each of us. But are only six buttons there, to-day.

'Come, Tamah,' said Father, with weight a-pull at his voice.

Is funny it, how Sammy's eyes shine when he hears bass drum a-talk.

CHAPTER II

Is the first time, this, I ha' ever played street arab from me family. Is not a good feeling, this, street arab. For people are a-jostle you and a-push you and a-pull you and there is no' your family to say *Let up!* Nobody there to hold your hand.

It has been easy to get away from me family, for nobody was noticing me when bass drums boom and militiamen step off for parade ground.

Father was leading us with his beaver hat high in the air. If anybody should ha' noticed me, should be my bro' Sammy who was a-walk beside me; but when drums sound and pipes begin skirling, Sammy's eyes are always blind with shine. So I waited 'til we come out o' the Square, and when militiamen turned left to parade ground, Johnny turned to the right. A good.

But I do no' know where to find Davie. And find, I must find him since thunderhead is a-gather in Father's eyes, no?

What makes my bro' Davie stay so? Sun has no' set yet on the day my father brought trace leather to his back, yet Davie is a-look trouble again. I do not know where to find him, but one thing I know, Davie will no' be watching Missis Queen's soldiermen.

Morant Bay streets are narrow and sun hot there on the land. I am walking in the shady under shop piazzas, but big people want shady too and street arab has no father to hold his hand and say *Let up there!*

So push, they are a-push me all about and I must jump to escape gutter-water. Sometimes when I am a-look where to jump, big people's elbows gone into me side, and me face gone into gutterwater. Black people are many on the street, and there is big laugh when I get up from the gutter and wipe morass from my eyes.

My osnaburg pantaloons wet well and good now and the sun does no' feel so hot now; but is miserable and tired, me, for I ha' fallen down enough-plenty times. The pantaloons which ha' been too short for 'Zekiel are now too long for Johnny, for the water was too heavy for the rolls which Mother made in the legs and now they ha' come down over me toes. So, stumble, I must stumble with morass full in mouth and eyes and big people a-laugh at me.

Hear them: 'Coo, *buckra* street arab! Coo, white skin street arab!'

Then I must cry. *Davie O! Davie O!*

'Johnny O! Johnny Campbell O!'

Somebody a-call to me, but it is no' Davie and howsoever morass is full in me eyes.

'Johnny! Johnny Piper O!'

Then I know that is Timothy from negro barracks, for he always calls me Johnny Piper since he says I can swim like Piper fish.

I get the morass out of me eyes and there is Timothy running across the street to me. But what makes Timothy's face stay so? Not gutter water it could be, for Timothy is a boastie *pickney* who tells me that he has been in Morant Bay street oftentimes, he one. But I look good and I can see that

Timothy is a-cry and that eye-water is making gully in the dirt o' his face.

Hear him, words a-come with his breath: 'Johnny O—constables lock up me pappie!'

Lord O! Hear, I did hear once say Timothy's father rolls dice at Morant Bay every markey-day, but I did no' know he would roll dice on Sabbath day too. All the same, he is a nice man, Mr. Abram M'Laren, and how he loves Davie too. Timothy is still a-holler.

'Constables lock up me pappie for making noise at Humphrey church window!'

Wayah! Is not for gambling it! Three men arrested, did say Potter Hans. The way he is bawling, Timothy must catch breath before more words will come.

'Me pappie—and two Morant Bay men and your bro' Davie!'

When something bad happens to frighten you, such a way your heart can jump though!

Bup! And pain a-crawl over your chest and night-time a-cover your eyes, and talk 'round you sound like thunder far down the Bay.

Then afterwards, pain leaving your chest and is daylight again and people are a-talk around you. So it was at Morant Bay when Timothy was a-tell me say that Davie in the lock-up.

Then, gone, I am gone from Timothy, a-run and a-stumble and a-fall on the stones. *Davie O! Davie O!*

All I am doing is running. Running into a tobacco-woman's donkey and the hamper on me chest and me there on the ground. Get up, I get up quickly, and she clouts me in the head and calls me loud: '*Buckra street arab!*'

All I am a-do is running. Wipe blood, but no eyewater from me face. 'Zekiel's pantaloons are too long for me, so I must hold i' up when I run. No softness there in the stones under my feet. There is nobody to say *let up* for street arab, and big people are a-clout me all about.

I am running to the lock-up. I must find my bro' Davie.

Eh! Eh! Everybody ha' no' gone to the parade ground!

Here is everybody in front o' the lock-up! Is a cactus fence it, with big people for cactus. You try to pass through big people, and cactus fence pierces you when big people pinch you and clout you and call you *buckra* street arab.

I am a-holler to tell them say: 'Davie—me bro' Davie in the lock-up!

But the cactus fence does not move, only pushes you down on the stones. That is the time then I feel to cry and go by the lock-up stone wall. Is nice, and not nice, to cry when you are hurt. Eye-water makes you 'shamed, but quiet there is inside o' you afterwards. I am leaning on the wall and my arms are soft and warm 'gainst me forehead. Nice, and no' nice to cry.

By-an'-by, quietness reaches me. I look up the street and see that the lock-up door is closed, with four constables a-stand on the steps, their muskets under their arms. People are a-shout at them:

'Let them out! Let them out! You hangman you! You traitor you!'

'Member now, I remember say it was that time that a woman picked up the first rock-stone. She can no' fling straight, like Timothy or me, for the rock-stone falls at the bottom o' the steps. She can no' fling, but the man who stood side-and-side of her dropped a rock-stone clear on a constable's helmet. Then now, people start a-fling.

Constables are calling out and raising their muskets, but before anything else can happen, I hear Missis Queen's bugler sounding the alarm and horses come tearing 'round the corner.

Jesus o' Saint Jago! Watch them Johnny O! Watch hurricane take cactus fence and is a-toss it all about!

Mounted militiamen come a-tear around the corner and the crowd is scattering like plover out o' the reeds when they hear gunshot. A good. For, suffer, I did suffer when they pinched me and pushed me. Quietness is gone out of me. Cymbals are a-crash inside me belly. I am waving my hands and screaming: 'Ride them down! Ride them down! Mash them, soldierman!'

But, all of a sudden I cover me mouth. For, as the cactus fence reels towards me, 'member I remember that street arab

has no' got any parent to say: *let up, there*. God o' me! Cymbals are dead in me belly now and there is a little pain there, for frighten has come to me.

Big people's feet catch up wi' me and down Johnny is gone again. I am close against the stonewall so I do no' get many kicks, but when I get up, blood is there on me face. Then, now, the horses are a-come—Johnny can run where?

I am a-bawl for miliatiamen to let up before they reach me, but believe I believe that they ha' no' even seen me at all. Dead, Johnny dead?

All the same, God is good to pickney. For, then it is that I notice say there is a stormwater drain at the foot o' the wall with iron bars across it. So, push, I am a-push my head through the bars and 'Zekiel's pantaloons are a-flutter behind me. Inside, me, but one leg o' the pantaloons is no' with me.

By-and-by, when no sobs leave inside o' me, I look where I am. There is another stonewall in front of me, and when I see more iron bars across the windows in the wall, nobody ha' to tell me say is the lock-up this where me bro' Davie is.

Somebody inside is a-blaspheme. I listen good, and think it must be Mr. Abram. This is the back part of the lock-up, and the constables will be in front. Well, then, smart, I must play smart. A Maroon hillman, me, a-crawl up on English camp. Smart, I must play smart. I creep to the stonewall and call softly: 'Mr. Abram O!'

Blasphemy stops a little bit. I call again: 'Mr. Abram O! Is me it, Johnny!'

Night-time in we bedroom when she is a-talk with me father, Mother calls him Flathead Abram. Flathead, with face broad and black under it, looks down on me through the window. When we eyes make four, there is surprise in his.

'What you a-do here, Mas'r Johnny?'

'Is Davie it,' I whisper back. Sobs are gone now but hiccup has come on me. 'Davie in the lock-up too.'

'How you are a-bleed? Who licked you?'

How Flathead M'Laren stay so? I fist against the stonewall with vex a-twist me face. 'Davie I want! Where Davie?' I say loud.

Mr. Abram sees I do no' want to talk with him, so he puts his finger through the window and points. And, gone, I am gone.

But here I do no' have to call, for when I look up, Davie is there. Wildness is in me bro' Davie's eyes and his hair like flax is a-stand up on his head.

'Davie O! Davie O!'

See Davie there a-look down on me like monkey at August Fair! Poor Davie—me poor big bro' Davie.

But there is grin from him, and softly: 'Cho, man.'

That is how my bro' stays. Frighten taking you, and he says *Cho, man*, and frighten gone from you all of a sudden. I swallow on a sob and wipe me nose clean on the pantaloon waist.

'How come they held you, man?' I asked him.

Davie grinned again. 'I heard they had held Abram, so I ran to the lock-up and jumped on the steps and constables hauled me inside. Is where Sammy?'

'Militia drums a-sound, and there is shine in Sammy's eyes,' I told him.

'Find him, Johnny, he must go to Stoney Gut to-day-day to tell Deacon Bogle o' this.'

Fool-fool this, now, I am a-think; for when I go back to Salt Savannah and gets me whipping, not one of we pickney can leave again for Father's eyes will be making four with ours all the time. I tell Davie this.

His head nods quick, then his eyes go to bed. When they come back to me, they are going over me like mule-buyer at Cedar Valley auction.

All of a sudden, hear him: 'You must go then.'

Eh? Me one? To pass Mother Cruikshank's burying ground me one? Is what it Davie a-say?

Davie says: 'You ha' to go quick now, Bro' John, for constables soon will pass around.'

Bro' John? Who Davie a-call Bro' John?

'Bro'—John?'

Davie grinned. 'You ha' to go quickly, Bro' John-Johnny—you one.'

Bro' John—and me only eight! Nobody ever say Sis Naomi?

'Tell Deacon say they ha' caged we in Morant Bay lock-up

and that we will go before Custos at morning. Put foot in hand, Bro' Johnny!

Well, then, gone, I am gone, yes?

'Tell Deacon all o' we are ready, Bro' John!' Davie called soft to me.

No' easy to get through iron bars this time, for there is no frighten behind me to push me. Howsoever, push and wriggle, and I am outside with another piece o' 'Zekiel's pantaloons left behind. I peep back through the bars and there is Davie a-grin from his cage. His mouth forms like he says *Bro' John*. I love Davie.

There is quiet on the street, cactus fence has gone. Sun hot there on land. I rip t'other pantaloons leg so both of them are same length now. I am a-think say why did Mother not shorten them like how I have done, instead of rolling it like *cotter* cloth what Morant fisherwomen put on their heads?

Starch on me face, face stiff wi' blood and dirt. I wash me face clean with gutter-water and dry it with the piece o' pantaloons. Then I stick this piece in me shirt pocket, leave it a-hang like Father's breast 'kerchief.

Is five miles it, to Stoney Gut. I turn me face for sun-up and distance.

The author, VICTOR STAFFORD REID, is a Jamaican. He has been a newspaperman for a number of years in the island, attached to the century-old Daily Gleaner, one of the best known of Colonial papers. He has written many short stories which have been published in West Indian magazines. Mr. Reid expects to complete the book by the spring of 1948.

A SUNSET RUMINATION

by PATRIC DICKINSON

So narrow the range of living: can I sound
My deepest roots in the sweet ground
Or to my topmost branches reach
And be certain which is which?
Out of my sight sings an unknown bird,
Immortal weathercock: falls a feather
Drifting crazily easily mazily
Down to my feet with a broken twig
And a broken eggshell to emphasize
'This can only happen this way once,
'And if you dig where the feather lies
'You'll dig up your own dead bones'.

Then I'll dig up my own dead bones
And create myself but know,
As I do, I'm the Ultimate
And Prototype of mankind—
My limits of sensation,
My power and scope of mind,
My boundaries of passion,
Make me the Definition
For ever: I can create
Only whatever is there
Where the golden feather lies,
Only whatever there is—
There are times I would not dare.

There are times I would not dare: but is this one?
At the valley-head there falls our holiday sun
Soft as a feather, and till he die
One cannot look him straight in the eye
That last look false to the past: '(O fix your love
At noon—and the red and the green pennies
Dancing balefully wilfully joyfully
Wont weigh down one lark's-eye of your love.)

But staring up the valley with all my life,
 Not eyes alone, there sinks my love
 Whose eager light on my lunar grief
 Changes the scene I am witness of:

What I am witness of
 Is a trial of myself.
 How resist the romantic lie?
 For there with its fiery plume
 Of smoke the train goes west
 Like a Viking into the gloom,
 And puts one to the test
 Of confessing which was first—
 Emotion or Cunning Eye
 For setting the scene: and the Being,
 My Ultimate, moves in imagination
 Through object-seen and subject-seeing
 Like the two halves of creation—

Like the two halves of creation, for life and death
 Must mate in me on the bed of truth.
 And now in the liquid turquoise interlight
 A warning goes, and volplaning after it
 Like a V-bomb glides an owl, and its feather
 Drifting fearfully eerily terribly
 Falls at my feet and a fieldmouse says,
 With a broken back to emphasize:
'This can happen again till the end of the world,
'And if you dig where the feather lies
'You'll dig up the bones of your unborn child,'

Then I'll dig up the bones of my unborn child
 To embody and endow
 With human attributes.
 This evening, yes, I might dare
 Make myself as much as a mouse,
 Hidden under a feather in fear,
 And hope for the owl to pass:

POETRY

For I've been as the fieldmouse has
And known fear to my roots—
I might; but though I can look
To the sun to prove my soul,
Once I am in the dark
I crave for the eyes of the owl.

THE TWO NEIGHBOURS

by GEORGE CAMPBELL HAY

Two that through windy nights kept company,
two in the dark, two on the sea at the steering,
with aye one another's bow-wave and wake to see,
the neighbour's light away on the beam plunging and soaring.

Two on blind nights seeking counsel in turn—
'Where will we head now?'—sharing their care and
labours,
spoke across plashing waters from stern to stern,
comrades in calm, fellows in storm, night-sea neighbours.

Dark and daybreak, heat and hail had tried
and schooled the two in the master glance for esteeming
the curve of the outgoing net, the set of the tide,
the drift of wind and sea, the airt where the prey was
swimming.

Two on the sea. And the one fell sick at last,
'for he was weak, the soul, and old.' And the other
watched long nights by his bed, as on nights that were past
he watched from the stern for his light, sea-neighbour, in ill
a brother.

Watched by the peep of a lamp long nights by his side;
brightened his mood, talking their sea-nights over;
followed him to Cill Aindreis when he died,
and left him at peace in a lee that would feel no wind for ever.

D'ANNUNZIO

GIOVANNI BALDELLI

“LISEZ six lignes de suite dans Tite Live; involontairement la voix s'élève, vous prenez le ton soutenu, vous défendez une cause, et vous prononcez un discours.”¹

These words from Taine's *Essai sur Tite Live* brilliantly call attention to one of the chief characteristics of Latin literature whose spirit Italian literature has naturally inherited, and on whose models—except partly for the lyric and, of course, for the novel—it has rigorously developed. It is not sufficient for the typical Italian writer or speaker to have something to say; he must say it emphatically, as though something messianic or apocalyptic were attached to it, as though it were the most important thing in the world for others urgently to know. The Italian reader or listener on the other hand does not ask for mere information; he wants each statement to be carried by and carry emotion. The fact that the Italian people are at the same time profoundly sceptical is not a contradiction of this, but rather its necessary consequence and complement. For while scepticism is unavoidable when messianic and apocalyptic messages are an everyday occurrence, and nothing ever happens to justify them, it is only profound in reason of the fact that the expectation of something transcendental to happen is always there, keenly felt and alive. The seal of truth does not lie for the Italian in the evidence of facts or in the logic of arguments, but in the extent and depth of persuasion that each speaker or writer manages to impart to his statements, however irrational these may be. For truth is to the Italian a living thing, and for him that author speaks most truly who shows himself most fully and intensely alive, thanks to the possession and overflowing of the faith or intoxication that makes him speak. Hence the rhetorical strain which pervades even the most unambitious and spontaneous works in Italian literature, which makes them look to the English

¹ Taine, *Essai sur Tite Live*, chap. iii.

reader violent and aggressive, or artificial, pedantic and insincere. For the English reader is generally of a more critical frame of mind, he is more chary of his nerves and heart, sufficiently satisfied with himself and with the world at large not to long for and welcome a revelation or a revolution each time he opens a book; he is too conservative and mindful of his homogeneity and continuity, too slow and too rigid perhaps, to change frequently the chords and keys of his sensibility, the bonds and basis of his common sense.

When in the field of literature or in anything national we aim at generalizations and want to determine differences and peculiarities, we find our material too fluid or unyielding, and however careful and œcumenic we are in our choice of instances, yet the choice itself is in the last analysis arbitrary and anything but conclusive. We uneasily feel at each step that a different or opposite case could with some goodwill and ingenuity be equally pleaded. But if literary criticism on the one hand will never be a science, there is no amount of scientific scruples on the other that will stop a cultured mind from defining, classifying, and analysing what by its very nature excludes all forms of definition, classification, and analysis.

The English writer, then, considers himself—or tries to give the impression that he considers himself—as one of the many, built out of the common clay, sharing in all the limitations and shortcomings of mankind. The more he can be identified with the man in the street, the more he feels that he has achieved his aim. His respect for his kind is fundamental. If he feels superior to them he covers it up, usually by means of humour, and he has a way of constantly apologizing for anything that is in him different from the others; he is always on his guard not to take himself too seriously lest he should appear ridiculous or paranormal. Prose is his real domain or else poetry in a Wordsworthian vein. The great English poets, such as Keats and Shelley, are felt by the majority to be exceptional not only in degree but in kind, to belong to another race altogether, while every Italian feels in himself the blood and seed of a Foscolo, a Giusti or a Petrarca. Englishmen may well boast of their superior poetry; the fact remains that it is

their prose which is genuinely appreciated abroad and has deeply influenced other literatures, while even at home Dickens and Wells are known, if not thought of, more than Shakespeare and Gray. No prose-writer in Italy on the other hand is better known and more revered than Dante or Leopardi, even by the most ignorant and unsophisticated people.

The Italian writer's vocation usually starts when classical mythology peoples the country round him with nymphs and gods, and Roman history models his face and movements with dignity, haughtiness and pompousness; even before he starts to love he murmurs the names of Laura and Beatrice, and he only picks up his pen when he thinks himself chosen and possessed by the demon of inspiration, when by some circumstance that seems to him extraordinary and unique he hears Fate bidding him to write nothing short of a national masterpiece. Then he expects mankind to gape at him in awe and admiration. The terms 'literary work' and 'literary production' sound almost insulting to his ears. He is a creator, he is above and beyond humanity, he must be, or persuade himself he is, in a state of hypersthenia, hyperæmia, or hyperæsthesia, he must in short feel no longer a man but a god, to decide himself to write. He prefers to be thought of as a madman rather than as one who uses his pen just like another would use his hammer or his spade.

It may perhaps appear that the contrast I have just drawn applies better to experienced and sedate writers as opposed to young and conceited ones, and I may be reminded that the presumption of being a genius is the besetting sin of writers of all nations and periods. Quite so; but while the Englishman generally keeps the sense of his own importance to himself and relies on his works to speak for him, the Italian forces it upon his neighbours even to the point of abstaining from writing lest his works should give the lie to his ambitious claim. The republic of letters in England does not encourage the egotistic and domineering type, while in Italy, if there is such a republic, the ground is always ready for the coming of a dictator. Besides, in spite of the impact of modern capitalistic civilization, writing has not yet in Italy been commercialized and made one of the many branches of business. The Italian people,

the uneducated as well as the cultured class, are full of respect and admiration for the supreme writer or poet. They look up at him as a being whom conventions and even the general code of moral behaviour do not bind. The poet ranks much higher in public estimation than the successful business-man, higher than the statesman, the bandit, and the film-star. The literary genius is ever expected and worshipped, and anyone who writes is supposed to advance the claim of being such a genius. There is no golden mean; one is *the* poet or else a poet-aster: one writes divinely or else one cannot write at all.

Several aspects of Italian literature find herein their partial explanation. How, for example, each century has its four or five gigantic figures, never a school or a 'pléiade'; how the well polished and sonorous 'novella' has thrived luxuriously, while the novel which was imported never struck deep roots; how even nowadays books for the general public are in constant demand and never satisfactorily produced; how, in every Italian book you may chance to pick up, you immediately feel that the author is mostly preoccupied with writing strikingly and well, and conscious of his adding a new work to literature, instead of expressing his ideas clearly and unadornedly, of telling his story naturally and simply; how the literary career in Italy is extremely difficult, and the literary world torn by bitter competition and venomous jealousies; and finally why the personality, the amazing career and astounding success of Gabriele D'Annunzio, the phenomenon 'D'Annunzio' as we may call it, the sterling qualities and blemishes of his works, have made their appearance on Italian soil, and could never be possible anywhere else.

Indeed, D'Annunzio is a typical and select child of the Mediterranean climate, both physical and spiritual. He was far from ignorant of English literature and life. He borrowed freely from the former, and wrote on the second '*Il compagno dell'uomo senza cigli*', one of his longest and most painstaking novels. But to anything that came from the North, be it good or bad, be it from England or from Germany, his spirit always remained totally impermeable. He never understood or cared for democracy, with its electoral and parliamentary system, its committees and sub-committees, its respect for public

opinion, its mania for association and organization, its judicious care for the welfare of the masses and its morbid interest in the sick and the mentally defective. If ever he had a sympathy for democracy, it was for the golden life of such cities as Athens and Florence, for all that democracy stood for in these cities against oriental despotism and northern barbarism, for the 'agorá' and the 'agorá', not for Parliament lobbies or for laws and regulations drawn in fusty and frowzy rooms, away from the sun, and for a people of all but a sunny disposition. If he is for the people, it is for their festivities and for their silent suffering, for their smell of earth and for their rural deities, for the violence and beauty of their superstitions, the immaculateness of their feelings, their power for passion and sacrifice; it is for the Virgilian '*patiens operum parvoque adsueta juventus*',¹ never for the people of the modern industrial towns, amorphous, uncouth, mean, and shallow, ever grumbling and ever complaining, envious and never strong and alive, except for some immediate and material gain.

It is not by chance that democracy as we know it was born in England, and never could be properly assimilated by Southern countries. Italy is the country of individualism, and yet England, not Italy, is the country of liberties. For the rights of the individual become a political reality where the conscience thereof is not so developed and so keen as to efface social sense altogether. The Italian, and D'Annunzio pre-eminently among Italians, will not tolerate any boundary or impediment to the complete expansion of his abilities and satisfaction of his desires. The will to be god-like presupposes inequality, the lowness and even the abjection of the many. Here again the climate of the different countries is primarily responsible. In the English weather no one is likely to feel himself a god, and even less to regard as in any way godlike another person who moves under and struggles against the same unsympathetic and depressing weather. The mythologies of the North are dreary and terrible, they lack the splendour and warmth of the Classical one. Not so often do the Northern gods fall in love with men and women as do the gods of Olympus. Paganism is the natural religion of the South, and there is a

¹ Georg. ii, 472.

deep accent of truth in the message D'Annunzio expressed in one of his poems: 'Il gran Pan non è morto.'¹ Twenty centuries of Christianity and Roman Church have not taught Italians to be humble, any more than they have taught them to despise the flesh and to forego the sensual and æsthetical pleasures of this world for the cold spiritual beatitudes of a hypothetical one to come, or for the less hypothetical but not less cold satisfactions of a duty towards one's fellow-creatures daily and meticulously fulfilled. The Nietzschean 'Man is a thing that needs surpassing' is an intimate and familiar call to every Italian, and the Italian past lends itself as readily to D'Annunzio's æsthetical vision of history as to the idealistic interpretation of the same by an Oriani or a Gentile for whom the course of human events has no other purpose than that of producing extraordinary individuals, of manifesting spirit in its highest and richest possibilities. Italian history is constellated with geniuses and tyrants, great artists, great lovers, great saints. Italy is no favourable ground for the seeds of historical materialism. The masses do not count except as a means and a pedestal for powerful personalities to affirm themselves and rise. The intoxication of self, be it the intoxication of power or that of artistic creation, is not considered as ephemeral and accidental, but as the very reason and meaning of life. In other countries this intoxication may come from books or other drugs; in Italy it comes directly from the Mediterranean sun, and it is as abiding and universal as the sun, it has the strength and the vitality of a categorical imperative.

The English may be a more 'moral' people than the Italian, but, assuming human nature is one, it would be dangerous to claim that each Englishman is less egocentric than his Italian counterpart. Morals spring and thrive most where they are most needed. The strong objection of the average Englishman to any pushful and bumptious egotist lies most probably in the rebellion of his own nature, equally selfish and vain, but checked and tempered by social sense, education and manners, which do not allow that the costly renunciation of one's selfish nature should result in an encouragement to the insulting gratification of selfish instincts of another. In the readiness of

¹ *Laus Vitæ, Alcione.*

the average Italian, on the other hand, to accept and submit to the outstanding egotist, there is that passiveness and voluntary humiliation, that prompt surrendering to a greater self, which is recognized as the fundamental element of all feelings of worship and love, feelings that lie surely on this side of morals, but perhaps also beyond. So while egotism is abhorred in England as highly 'immoral', in Italy it is always respected, provided there is behind it a sufficiently strong and interesting personality.

T. S. Eliot writes in the essay that serves as preface to his *Choice of Kipling's Verse* that 'the great poet at his greatest moments writes transparently so that our attention is directed to the object and not to the medium'. This is what D'Annunzio rarely does, yet no one will doubt of his greatness as a poet. The medium with him is paramount, and at his greatest moments he beautifies the object with the gorgeous colouring and copious pomp of his diction, with the fine melody of his lyricism, so well he knows that word and thought are one, that all the so-called objective world only acquires meaning and beauty through the medium of language.

For substance and form are inseparable in art. There is no 'purely' formal beauty. The one to which this name is given is either substance and form extraneous to each other or both substance and form out of place. It is disproportionate, fragmentary, unorganized, heterogeneous, or borrowed beauty, ornamental beauty, as it is also called, impersonal, unassimilated, unliving elements of beauty, which fail to be complete beauty because there are too many or too few of them, because they are not those which in exact measure and distinct quality are demanded by the thing of beauty that is to be expressed, unmixed, unique, and clearly defined, in each particular case the witness and conveyor of a particular beauty. In the light of such reflections a curse like that of D'Alembert 'Malheur aux productions de l'art dont toute la beauté n'est que pour les artistes,' does not carry much weight. For he must be an artist who can be stirred by and enjoy an æsthetical emotion. Many other things beside æsthetics may be in a piece of poetry or prose, as for instance and especially in Kipling's verse and prose, which will stir and give enjoyment

to the reader, and Beauty, as it happens, is among the least and weakest of the interests of the general public. But what makes beautiful a work of art is precisely its appeal to artists, to that artistic sense and consciousness which is in all polished and gracefully-minded men.

Doubtless, there is a lot in D'Annunzio that could be classified as mere ornamentation and bad art, but only if we forget that often the beautiful thing D'Annunzio is expressing and unfolding in all its robustness and agility is primarily the Italian language itself. We often feel, in reading D'Annunzio, that our attention is drawn to the medium and not to the object, but again we must not forget that this medium is the light and eye by means of which all things are seen and really are such as we see them.

In his dramas in particular, so criticism runs, the action is broken, retarded and scattered by his love of plastic poses, by the magic of music, the lustre of colours, the luxury of garments and furnitures, the sombreness or splendour of the atmosphere, by the uncanny immediacy or dizzying remoteness of the times his art resuscitates. This criticism is to the point: but, even then, action is not necessarily what we want from a play, as in that life, of which a play is supposed to be a reproduction, action is far from being its essential or most important element. Sensations are sublimized in keen æsthetical perceptions and ecstatic raptures, alert consciousness and relentless awareness, the enjoyment of the manifold gift of life as we travel along, such things are more gratifying, of a more enduring and intrinsic value than any deed we might achieve, than any lofty purpose we try to actualize. Each scene, each movement, each word in a D'Annunzio play, draws all our attention to itself. He is not concerned with keeping us in suspense and playing with our feelings of expectation. There is no subordination of parts to the whole, no development of characters or situations, no preparation to some central episode, no ravelling and unravelling of plots, no distinction between main and secondary themes. All is given at each moment as an absolute; the whole of the artist is there, and so must be the whole of the reader or spectator, abandoned to the stream of words and images and sensations, with nothing but a

re-echoing murmur in his ears of what has gone before, his attention never withholding itself in anticipation of more music to come.

If then one turns to D'Annunzio's life, so full of daring deeds and amorous successes, one asks oneself perplexedly whether the products of his imagination or the man himself is the greater work of art. It is difficult to find a parallel in the Italian or any other literature. The name that first suggests itself to an English mind is probably that of Oscar Wilde. He also endeavoured to make a work of art of his life as well as of his books, but he was far from being as successful as D'Annunzio was, as he himself indirectly came to avow when he said that a true poet in life was more easily to be found in one whose poems were irremissibly second or third rate. Like D'Annunzio, Oscar Wilde used to charm everyone with his speech; both D'Annunzio and Oscar Wilde were shockingly immoral, but while the Englishman met with social ostracism and prison, D'Annunzio bent to his will and whims the hard, sordid, and platitudinous spirit of his age, and won outward respect from all social, political, military, and religious powers of his country. In daring and spectacular exploits he made a hero of himself during the first world war, and the legend goes that in his fantastic palace at Gardone he lived in turn with the opulence and lewdness of an Oriental despot, and with the simplicity and austerity of a Franciscan friar. If any ever did, D'Annunzio lived like a superman and was moreover his own bard. How he did it—a challenge to the historical materialist—can only be tautologically explained by saying that he was D'Annunzio.

Literature has meaning and value because it is something other than reality. To bring realism into literature may be salutary and even refreshing at times, but it is generally too easily done to deserve admiration, and also often so easily overdone as to become a pest not only in literature, but also in each individual life that feeds, among other things, on literature. The life-documents of the De Goncourt, the shorthand records of dialogues that fill so many pages in modern novels, the conversational and familiar style in some modern poetry as well as the whole bulk of journalism, all this is to literature

what the news-reel is to tragedy, or photography to painting. The modern writers and readers who want literature to be a faithful reproduction of life have not even the redeeming sense of a harmony and ideal order in life and nature, they are hardly aware that there is such a thing as nature, and all their interest is in men, in their getting in one another's way, in their being funny, crazy, helpless, hapless, sordid, and low. The more disorder, discordance, and meaninglessness there is in the facts they write or read about the happier they seem to be. And so we meet in books with the same harshness, violence, obtrusiveness, and intrusiveness of facts, the same triviality and vulgarity of people which confront us at every step in our daily life. We are obsessed by the necessity of facing facts and forcing our neighbours to do the same, and because of this and because of the realism in our literature we like to think of ourselves as stronger and manlier than the people of ages past. We forget that it was in those ages which witnessed most violence and manliness that the most refined and artificial forms of literature developed. Such was the age of the troubadours, that of the pastoral novel, of Marinism and Gongorism, of André Chenier and the Abbé Delille. We forget that men of action, of great military prowess or political capacities, such as Frederick the Second and Frederick the Great, Sir Philip Sydney, Garcilasso de la Vega, and Cervantes delighted in what is generally classified nowadays as 'soppy nonsense'. The truth is that these men and these ages felt that literature was meant to give what life did not give, and the same need that was felt by courtiers and men of the sword was felt too by the masses, who, in the ages that were most hard to them, developed and craved for another form of nonsense to our eyes, the chivalrous novel. A true child of our times, G. B. Shaw, does but faithfully reflect the general uncritical opinion, in spite of all his singular attitudes and provoking paradoxes, when he sweepingly affirms that all good literature is nothing but journalism.

Now D'Annunzio, like the Surrealist André Breton, would never write such a sentence as 'Mrs. Smith left her house at a quarter past three, and hired a taxi which took her in ten minutes to the house of Mrs. Brown.' His language is always

poetical, and at the same time, plastic, precise. There is no vagueness in his images, no sentimentalism in his sentiments; his words are always chosen for their rendering the quality of things, that something that always escapes the realist's eyes. Observation is not enough for him. He has not Dickens' or Pio Barroja's exaggerated vision, Balzac or Dostoiewski's meticulousness of description. He has an eye for essentials, he knows that it is only through style that things acquire solidity of form, definiteness of contours, wholeness and movement. He ennobles everything he sees, for there is nothing vulgar or mean when the mind is noble, and if art fails to give nobility to things it fails its purpose.

This ennobling function of language deserves attention. Class-distinctions will always exist; even when equality should be achieved. For cleanness, manners, delicate and polished feelings, culture, and, above all, respect for language and thought, are all marks of distinction. Even when individually acquired, they are plied in or create their own 'milieu', a class, a circle, a 'coterie'. The equality some social reformers and revolutionists think of can only be achieved by the elimination of all that is in any way outstanding, by lowering to their minimum expression the qualities which make an individual deserving to live in a civilized community. The democratic demand on the writer is that he should write about things and in a language that everybody understands. The result, when this demand is strictly and earnestly adhered to, is that one thinks what everybody can think, and writes in a way everybody could write. D'Annunzio on the other hand is a full-blown aristocrat; uncompromisingly so; and he will always be loved by those who understand the meaning and necessity of aristocracy, by those who love and strive after the best. He is a difficult writer; a special vocabulary is needed to understand him whole. But the difficulties one has to overcome are amply compensated by the consciousness of the keen mental faculties brought into play, and by the full possession of the flesh and spirit of his writings, only to be acquired by love and care. To study and understand D'Annunzio one has to strip oneself of his everyday twentieth century standardized garments, habits, and thoughts, and one must don the Greek

tunic, move and act with the grace and dignity testified by the sculptures of antiquity, one must think with the vigour of Plato, the lightness of Aristophanes, and the tragic sense of Sophocles. D'Annunzio's world is free from all heaviness and greyness, free from misery and toil, from all that oppresses and crushes and disfigures man. All his characters are conscious of representing and telling something about man; there is no weakness or ugliness in any of them, they are all heroes and heroines. If they succumb it is only to Fate. There is not in him a single note of maudlin pessimism, not a single depressing thought. He is at no moment one of those Goethe styled the 'Lazaretto poets'. He is always healthy and bracing in his poetry, if not always exultant in his prose. He could only be called immoral and a corruptor by those who were too weak to stand the impact of his magnified ego, and the alluring luxury of his women and passions.

Born a pagan, with a thorough classical education, he lived, thought, and expressed himself as though he were living in a Homeric time, 'in a time, as Pater says, in which one could hardly have spoken at all without ideal effect, or the sailors pull down their boat without making a picture in the great style against a sky charged with marvels'. One must admire D'Annunzio for having managed to keep himself free and above all that in his, as in our age, is cheap, vulgar, enervated, sapless and mindless, uninspired, sceptical, fatigued, and for having vitalized and ennobled with the wonder and dash of a primitive so much that has made of our world the 'Waste Land' of T. S. Eliot. Yes, even one who believes in a democratic reality must admire his intrinsic aristocratic qualities. For, as it has been mildly put: 'among the many advantages of broad political basis and of democratic institutions, culture is not generally to be reckoned. There is a general tendency to be popular in all things: and popularity and vulgarity have a tendency to unite.'

Because literature tends on the whole towards more and more popular and vulgar forms, D'Annunzio's fame is now decidedly on the wane. He is so singular in his art, and so uncompromising in his egotism that the majority resent having to look up at him from below. They resent his having no eyes

or sympathy for the majority, his habit of directing all attention to himself and to the objects he chooses to beautify. They loath to give such passiveness as he demands. In order to cherish an author, they want to feel that they have something in common with him, that however high he is perched he kindly and humbly invites others to sit up with him. They want him, in other words, to be a social being. But D'Annunzio seems to lack all those social qualities we call virtues. He refuses to reason, for one thing. We can never argue with him, and in so far as we are democratic, argument is for us as necessary as bread. There is no other point of view in his books but his own; he never gives a sign of being aware of the possibility even of other points of view. He has no respect, even less worship, for the masses or for the ideals the masses are supposed to live and to fight for. Being an aristocrat all round, his fate will probably be the same as that of all aristocracy, of all the æsthetical and tragic values aristocracy alone has contributed to the spiritual patrimony of mankind. The day is probably not far when reading D'Annunzio will in some countries be considered a political crime and dealt with accordingly. Some of his poems and passages from his novels will still keep on appearing in Italian anthologies, and a few paragraphs or a chapter will be allotted to him in histories of Italian literature, where it will be said that he stands by himself, and that his type and the conditions that have favoured his appearance and success will definitely and fortunately not be repeated. The conclusion will be that he is not worth bothering about. Already among the Italian critics who talk about him, amazingly few show any deep or comprehensive knowledge of his works.

All criticism is a valuation, a distinguishing between good and bad, better and worse, and the best criterion, to my mind, of literary valuation is the amount and quality of æsthetical contribution each author or each work has to add to the store of human experience. The more an author gives us the more he is to be praised. Form, of course, is all important, for a defective form would mean that the gift is to be transformed, improved, shorn or supplemented by the recipient of the gift, and it would also justify, as it always does to unphilosophical

critics, all shades and hues of literary relativism; it would make æsthetics a mere matter of taste, giving, that is to say, the right of æsthetical citizenship to all actual and possible forms of bad taste. The material test or practical method for determining the worth of a piece of literature—useful as an intellectual training and as an essential part in the education of one's æsthetical faculty, though unnecessary to the direct exercise and enjoyment of it—would then consist in a process of repeatedly attempted substitutions of words, expressions, and constructions to those the author has employed in the passage under examination. If any of the attempted substitutions does break or impair the emotional, tonal, harmonic, or melodic unity of the piece examined, it would mean that the piece is perfect. If, on the other hand, substitutions improve or leave unaffected the content and portent of the piece, then the piece is imperfect and ugly. This method of substitution is indeed the real test of artistic unity, and unity is what makes a work artistic and classically fine. Artistic unity proceeds from the uniqueness of a man's character and experience, and from its translation into a unique expression. This process of translation is now made extremely difficult both by the manifold temptations of language and by the closely besieging, harassing host of alien experiences past, contemporary or potential. Unity goes hand in hand with originality because lack of originality means borrowing and intrusion, ornament, accretions and incrustations, all dead matter that weighs upon, hides, impedes, contaminates or kills that live uniqueness of character and experience which we must gentleman-like suppose is the prime motive and self-justification for an author to write. The difficulty is then made even greater by the use, abuse, and misuse of the spoken and written language, by which words and expressions lose their meaning, freshness, and force, thus exacting from the creative author a high power of discrimination and an unflinching tenacity of purpose, two qualities that tend to stem and abate the enthusiasm and 'entrain' of inspiration. With our method therefore we shall find each author's genuine contribution to the realm of beauty surprisingly small. One will deserve remembering merely for a well-chosen epithet or a strikingly placed verb, another for

some suggestive phrase, a third for a mood or intuition he lets us guess and try to re-experience, a fourth for the vague intimation of a new world, for the conjuring up of an unusual atmosphere; only a few for a thing wholly of beauty, unalterable, undiminishable, irreplaceable, a really living and new thing of beauty added for ever to the domain of æsthetical experience. We shall find also that D'Annunzio is one of these few.

'*La pioggia nel pineto*' is a unique masterpiece in the Italian language for the complete fusion of sound and meaning, of rhythm of verse with rhythm of sensations. In this poem you do not only hear and feel the falling of the rain, but you are given the poet's senses to hear and feel it, and once you have surrendered yourself to the charm of the poem, there is no personal experience of rain in a wood, even with the best of companions, that will stand comparison with the experience the poet gives you of his wanderings with the girl Ermione, the very spirit of rain and evening made sensuous, the body of earth and green made soul.

'Taci. Su le soglie
del bosco non odo
parole che dici
umane: ma 'odo
parole più nuove
che parlano gocciole e foglie
lontane.
Ascolta. Piove
dalle nuvole sparse.
Piove su le tamerici
salmastre ed arse,
piove su i pini
scagliosi ed irti,
piove su i mirti
divini,
su le ginestre fulgenti
di fiori accolti,
su i ginepri folti
di coccole aulenti,
piove su i nostri volti
silvani,

GIOVANNI BALDELLI

piove su le nostre mani
ignude,
su i nostri vestimenti
leggieri,
su i freschi pensieri
che l'anima schiude
novella,
su la favola bella
che ieri
t'illuse, che oggi m'illude,
o Ermione.' ¹

This poem, and others, like *Il Centauro* and *Dafne*, are unforgettable, perfect, unique. They will not grow old, fade and disintegrate with time. D'Annunzio's place in the various histories of Italian literature that will be written may shrink or expand, grow dimmer or more luminous, but those few poems of his will remain, together with others in the Italian and other literatures, always to stir intelligent and sensitive minds to the faith in the absolute of æsthetics, in the eternity and immutability of Beauty.

GIOVANNI BALDELLI was born in Milan in 1914, and under the influence of Tolstoy's writings left school at the age of fifteen to become a peasant. In 1933 he was arrested for anti-fascist activities and suffered nine months imprisonment. On his release he came to England, and at the outbreak of war was interned and embarked on the *Arandora Star*, from which ship he was rescued when it was torpedoed in July, 1940. He was taken to Australia and interned there for four years, after which he did forestry work under the Allied Works Council. He returned to England in 1945, to resume teaching, and has just been granted British naturalization.

¹ *Le Laudi*, ii, Fratelli Treves, Milano, 1914.

POETRY
CONCERNING THE NATURE
OF THINGS

by ALEX COMFORT

Midday in the island is
the sand of a green pool

the sun falls in a shaft
from a knothole in the door

the smoke of a fire runs
in a fold of the wind, dust

yellow like small bees
is swarming without a sound

moving perpetually
dust is the key to it

multiform dusts, a sufficient answer

In the fullness of time: all things
move to a centre, travel

by mile or inch, to reach
the effortless still Sargasso sea

the smooth shot of water, the sharp
anchors of metal, the soft

globes of oil, and the dull
burrs of earth move

unbreakable ductile dusts
the motes in the knothole beam

are what they are—travel
like bees at sunset back.

POETRY

The smoke of the birch fire
a skein across a tree

when the sun draws bars on it
is the soul of the tree, a white

impalpable similitude
grown out of tangible wood

something of finer gauge
than the grain of dusts or oils

but yet it casts a shadow

From wood or man—from me
when I am burned, the same.

Something more subtle, fine
meshes of smoke, the mind

as shadowless as glass
an unthinkably light dust

too small to settle and cloud
water, the mourners' clothes

or like the motes of air
in which a mote of dust

hangs gross as a river stone—
the fine dust of my mind

the fine smoke of this thought.

The dust by which we know
that the immaterial Gods

have the still finer grain
of nothing, the shadow of smoke

POETRY

the shadow of our own shadow
a net without its cords.

For matter in its sleep
is troubled by such dreams

Fear and the Absolute,
Reward and Punishment

the dust that moves in the sun
is awake and laughs at both

On that fine smoke that goes
up from a pyre, no judge

lays fetters, and he, unreal
Minos, the shadow cast

by our dream, is a dream. No river
runs fire or wailings. All

dispersed in that same sleep
give up their dusts and move

anonymous, and gone
like an army after war

each part to its own place.
Inextricable, beyond punishment

the thief absconding into leaf and fish
all our tracks covered.

Wrongs die slowly out as tales
passed like a flame from flame to candle on.

POETRY

This midday is no less
like a gold pool. I lie

at peace with matter, myself
being material

and all fear gone like the smoke
and the sun chasing the fear

even of the dreamless night.

POEM

by MERVYN PEAKE

My arms are rivers heavy with raw flood,
And their white reaches cry though flesh be dumb,
And I am ill with sudden tenderness
For him—I had not known that such duress
Of thorny sweetness fell to fatherhood.
Arms can be torrents; little creature, come
And in the river-banks of my caress

Find you a coign for conies, or a nest
Under the overhanging of my head
For wildfowl, or curl here, ah close, and be
In hearing of the tides that flood in me,
And listen to the boulders in my breast,
And dare the compass of my arms, nor dread
The pools of shade they spill for you, so gently

How vernal, how irradiant is his face
Lit up as though by stars or a quick breeze
Of lucent light that nowhere else abides
Save in his features lambent like a brides
And more unearthly than my crass embrace
Can share or hope for now . . . the rivers freeze
And my idiot arms fall, heavy, to my sides.

GORONWY'S HOUSE OF GOLD

GWYN JONES

ONE hot morning in May, Goronwy Morgan was lying in a field between the sea and the Cardigan Road. As he lay, he counted his blessings and found them but few. For forty years he had pursued wisdom in the two-roomed school which serves the black farmsteads and pink cottages about Rhydfelyn; he had escaped that penury which grinds down loving-kindness; had cheated no man and wronged no woman. But with it all he was unhappy. In all the days of his life he had washed his own head, and the pillow showed ever one dent of a morning. And now even the inks and the chalk and the slippery blackboard were behind him. The life that is lonely is assuredly empty; the life that is empty is not worth the living. So thinking, he took his nose out of the grass, knelt up and looked about him. To the north lay Dyfi, and Cader floating like a whale, and the long finger of Lleyln hooking at the tide; eastward were the soft rosy lumps of Plynlymon; he looked south to golden hillslopes and barren creamy beaches; he looked west and saw his own shape drowning in the sea.

'And some there be,' he heard the preacher drone, 'which have no memorial; who are perished as though they have never been; and are become as though they had never been born.' For all the glow and swoon of the morning, he shivered and found his forehead dry. With a sigh which was halfway to a groan, he rose hurriedly to his feet, outstared the winking diamonds of the inshore water, and turned his face sadly towards his home on the fronting hill of Goleufryn.

From grassy base to rock summit the hill was braceleted with walls of dark green stone on which the yellow lichen grew. These walls were cunningly set about triangular patches of grazing land, but these had long since been given over to rabbits and crows, or to such sheep and goats as wandered

there from unhasped gates or mildewed fences and were collected towards nightfall by whooping lads from the Rhydfelyn farms. Year after year the gorse had rooted lower, hawthorn and nettle and fat offshoots of bramble thrust to meet it. It seemed to Goronwy that his house would soon be but a stone in the wilderness. Time was when it shone like a ball of gold. It needs life, he thought, which I am too old and too dull to give it. At that moment he saw a stoat cross his path, a half-grown rabbit hanging from its jaws. The weight of its prey and the dangling legs forced it to hold its head high, so that it moved with great insolence and pride. 'Aye,' said Goronwy sombrely, 'such is the world,' and he looked neither right nor left till he passed through the gap in the wall which brought him level with his house.

It was built of such stone as braceleted the hill, but the bulging walls had been washed with ochre, and the black slate slabs of the windowsills carried boxes of drooping valerian and mignonette. The lintels had been cemented and then stuck about with cockleshells. A thin brown stream of mountain water slid away to the right, and to the left in the rear a cowbyre and hayloft stood unused but clean. Once I thought it snug and joyful, thought Goronwy, but now it is void and vast. What am I to do? Oh, what am I to do?

It is my loneliness, he thought, indoors, which is so unnatural. How wise was he who said, The solitary man must be god or devil! That I am no god, how well I know, nor shall I ever become one. That I am no devil, I hope; but I have no guarantee for the future. Why, I have not even a cat. And he told himself afresh the story of that holy man of old who knew no companions but a cock and a housefly. The cock would wake him at the first light of dawn, and when he read in the Bible the fly would move like a directing finger from word to word of it, so that he never lost his place.

It should not be hard, thought Goronwy wistfully, to get oneself a housefly.

At least, he thought, snatching at hope, this is a vast orange of a world, with no small variety of creatures crawling on its rind. Maybe if I look abroad, I shall find one desirous of my company. I shall not look too high—a human is as much above

my port as an archangel would be—and I want nothing to do with stoats and all such masters of barratry. 'But,' said he, thinking aloud, 'I shall now collect such food as is in the house, pocket the thirty-one pounds and sixpence which is hidden under the hearthstone, and set out on my quest. Nor shall I return until I find some humble creature to share my teacher's pension with me.'

As he made this resolution, misery and heartburning left him, and before the sun clanged noon he was tramping south on the Cardigan Road. It was perhaps an hour later that he saw three boys squatting round a stick fire where the plank bridge crosses the Rhigos stream. He was curious to know why they should endure both heat and stifling, and stepped aside to talk to them. One held a captive thrush in his hands, and the other two were heating needles in the fire.

'Boys,' said Goronwy, 'what are you doing with the little thrush?'

'It has been silent since we caught it,' they complained, 'and we are going to prick its eyes with red-hot needles, to make it sing.'

'Do no such thing,' he cried. 'Set the thrush free!'

'We will set it free if it doesn't sing when we have blinded it,' they promised.

'Free it at once, or I will make you!'

'Not you,' they answered. 'For it is ours, and we may do with it as we please. Besides,' added the oldest among them, 'we know you. You are the old schoolmaster of Rhydfelyn, and all the world calls you nuts.'

'Nuts? What have nuts to do with it? Free the bird!'

But the boys ran a short way from him and brought the needles near the eyes of the thrush. How he strained and he struggled, and opened wide his beak. 'Stop, stop,' shouted Goronwy, 'and I will buy the bird from you.' For he knew that those most deaf to mercy have no flaps on their ears when there is talk of profit.

'Money has a loud voice,' said the boys. 'We ask three-pence—'

'Agreed, agreed!'

'—An eye.'

'Agreed, agreed! Here is the money, and give me the bird.'

The boys laughed. 'From all we hear, the world's been giving you that this many a year. Besides,' whispered the oldest, 'when we get the money we will run away and blind the thrush just the same. Give me,' said each of the three, 'the money.'

'Me,' snapped the oldest, 'because I hold the thrush.'

'Me,' leered the middle one, 'because I stole the needles to prick out its eyes.'

'Me,' screamed the youngest. 'It was I stole the matches to light the fire.'

But Goronwy spun the sixpence to fall midway between them, and the thrush flew to the open from the grasping hand. He heard the three heads crash together, saw the fists thrash and flail, heard the squealing and squalling, and thought it a pity the thrush had not stayed to hear it too. For a moment he had wondered whether the thrush was the one to share his house with him, but he reproved himself for the selfish thought. He drank of the Rhigos stream, broke bread from the loaf in his pocket, and went back to the high road. Behind him the noise of greed and fury died with the distance.

'But nuts?' asked Goronwy. 'Surely a very foolish as well as a very wicked boy, that.'

It was late into the afternoon when he came to the wooded lands of Argoed, where a thousand laburnums spread their leaves under the sun and dripped liquid light from the long yellow chandeliers of their blossom. He turned from the road into cwms and clearings where a breeze moved the bluebells like the waters of an inland sea, and was sitting at last to rest against a broad smooth bole when he saw a man come into the glade ahead of him, followed by a thin-faced brindled bitch. The man carried a rope, and Goronwy observed with interest and then with horror what he proceeded to do with it. For he selected a strong bough standing out square from the tree at a height of six feet from the ground, and threw the rope up over it. Then he made a running noose at its one end. This done, he called to the bitch, which advanced unwillingly and with ingratiating quivers of her tail, and set the noose about

her neck. He was about to pull her up over the bough when Goronwy shouted and ran forward.

He had the uncordial face of a herring-gull, and wore a dark green celluloid patch over his left eye. 'And who are you?' he asked, slacking the rope.

'I am no one and nothing,' panted Goronwy. 'But why, oh why, should you hang this little dog?'

'Because she is mine, and because I choose to, and because rightly is she called bitch.'

'But has she done wrong?' asked Goronwy, and patted the sad head.

'No,' swore Greenpatch, and kicked her in the ribs, 'she lacks spirit for that. I am sick of the miserable looks of her. God knows I have beaten her enough in the attempt to make her spry. But my patience is now ended, and I'll waste no more of my time and strength on her than it takes to swing her up on this branch.' And he slid the rope through his hands.

But Goronwy caught at the slack of it. 'I can see how you have beaten her—her poor sides, her hanging head, the scar under her eye. Ah, little bitch,' he said, 'and would a creature like you choose to live, if life might be? Or shall I do wrong to spare you for more pain and grief?' The bitch looked up, her clotted eyes dilating with hope. 'Then live you shall, and henceforth have no fear.'

'You are either mad,' said Greenpatch, 'or nuts. But take your hand off the rope, for I will certainly hang her.'

'You are a ruffian!' shouted Goronwy.

'I am a property owner,' replied Greenpatch. 'The two things are quite distinct. Let go the rope.'

'Not I.' The bitch licked his hand and cowered. 'But I am a law-abiding man, more's the pity, and I will buy this dog from you rather than see her come to hurt.'

'Money,' said Greenpatch, 'chimes like a bell.' He nodded his head slowly, made a purse of his lips. 'What is your offer?'

The bitch crawled to Goronwy's boots. 'I will give you half a crown.'

'For so intelligent a bitch as this?' He twitched on the rope.

'I will give you five shillings.'

'A bitch so well-trained, so obedient, so clean about the house?' The rope slid upwards.

The bitch raised her eyes to Goronwy's. 'Then ten shillings—but that is my last bid.' A sudden jerk drew the bitch up on to her back legs. 'I have the law with me,' said Greenpatch, 'I know my rights. A dog of which I am so fond as this one—I'd rather leave her for the crows than be robbed.'

The bitch whined and scraped at Goronwy's thighs. Quick, said the whine, oh quick, I'm choking! 'Then a pound,' said Goronwy. 'And as God is my judge, if you pull further on the rope I will fell you to earth with my good stick—if I had one.'

'I am a man for honest dealing,' said Greenpatch. 'A pound it is, and when I see the colour of your money you may take the rope from round her neck.' Goronwy fumbled in his pocket and slid the outside note from his bundle, and as he handed it over the brindled bitch sighed and trembled against his legs. 'But you are a fool,' Greenpatch said, laughing. 'She will come sneaking home by evening, and I shall hang her then, as a stray.'

'If you again lay finger on my little bitch,' said Goronwy, fondling the head, 'I will hang you in turn, from the tallest tree in the forest. You are a stoat and a pimp and a barrator, and Argoed would be well rid of you. And with that, little bitch, we will wish him good day.'

'Good day, is it? Aye, good day to you and good riddance to her!' And Greenpatch kicked at the bitch so that she ran yelping into the forest. 'So much for the pair of you!'

Rage and pity filled Goronwy's head and heart, but the bitch's vanishing squeal banished all save pity, and he went running clumsily through the trees in hope to overtake her. Soon the sound of her grief was lost among the green curtains, his heart beat heavily from exertion and pain, and he sat wearily on an ivy-wrapped stump. 'I shall never see my little bitch again,' he lamented. 'For a second time I have parted with my money to no purpose—to no purpose of my own, I mean. How nice she would have been about my house! But like the thrush, she has left me.' He sighed. 'I am clearly a fool—I may even be nuts. The sun now shines from over the

sea, and it will be best for me to eat my words of this morning and go empty home.'

It was so he went back to the road and plodded northwards. But in an hour's time he saw ahead of him a man with no forehead sorely beating the rump of a fawn and white cow. As he drew near he could see the udder taut and dripping, so that the beast might hardly move her back legs.

'Why beat the cow, friend?' he asked urgently. 'You are a man not unused to beasts—indeed, you look much of a beast yourself. Surely she needs milking more than beating?'

Had the cowman a forehead, one would have said that he scowled. As it was, his eyes disappeared under his hair. 'I will beat her, and no one shall stop me. If her bag bursts, then burst it may. For I hate and loathe her.'

'How so, friend?'

'Because all the morning I drove her to market, and all the evening I have driven her home.' The cow lowed. 'Answer me back, would you?' And he whacked her anew on the rump.

'Friend,' said Goronwy, 'you should not punish the cow for your failure to sell her. Stop now and milk her.'

'I begrudge her the labour.'

'Then allow me to milk her for you. I cannot endure to see her in pain and hear her moaning.'

'Milk her? On to the ground? And pour good money in the dust? Do you think I am made of gold?'

'Not for one moment,' said Goronwy. 'But I hope you are not made of stone neither.'

The cowman cursed. 'She lost me thirty good pounds at market to-day, and all because she was grieving after her calf. Ah, that I had my thirty pounds,' he wailed, hammering the beast in front of him, 'and were rid of this curdle-milk, this she-devil with horns, this moaner and groaner.'

'Friend,' said Goronwy then, though he could hardly believe his own voice, 'I will give you thirty pounds for your cow, but first let me milk her.'

'Money,' said the cowman, 'is a trumpet. But thirty pounds for a cow like this? The best milker in Cardigan, the gentlest feeder, a comely beast. And what a mother! Look at that bag.

Feel those teats—no, hands off!’ For Goronwy already had his shoulder into her flank, ready to ease her. ‘Thirty pounds! Why, I wouldn’t sell my wife for less than thirty-one pounds ten.’

‘Thirty,’ said Goronwy, ‘is all I have.’

‘I know you now,’ said the cowman, scratching his thatch; ‘the schoolmaster from Rhydfelyn who is nuts. A man like you wouldn’t stick for thirty shillings. Don’t be mean to a hard-working man. I love that cow. I’d weep bitter tears for her even at thirty-one ten. At a penny less I’d break my heart.’

‘Thirty,’ said Goronwy, ‘is all I have.’

‘Look at those hocks,’ said the cowman, ‘feel those flanks—no, hands off! What a build—small enough for the mountain, big enough for the flat.’ The cow looked round and bellowed her pain. ‘What lungs!’ cried the cowman. ‘I’d give the skin off my thumb for lungs half as good.’ He saw Goronwy about to open his mouth on the old formula. ‘Thirty-one,’ he said, ‘and I’m robbing my children.’

‘Thirty,’ said Goronwy, ‘and this lump of beeswax.’

‘Thirty-fifteen, and a lump of beeswax, and I’m taking the clothes off my bed.’

‘Thirty and a lump of beeswax and my hat.’

‘All that and five shillings to spit on for luck.’

The cow moaned.

‘All that and my last piece of bread,’ said Goronwy.

‘And your waistcoat,’ said the cowman.

‘And my waistcoat,’ agreed Goronwy from his dream. ‘Here is the money, and here is the beeswax. Here is my hat, and here the waistcoat. And here is the bread. And now let me milk my cow.’

‘I know when I’m bested,’ said the cowman, ‘and since I have no forehead to wear your hat on you may have it back instead of luck money.’ And as Goronwy bent over and eased the glistening bag, the cowman went ape-like on his way.

‘I think, cow,’ said Goronwy, as the milk spurted into the dust of the road, ‘that I have done a very stupid thing. You, I am sure, think it a wise one.’ She grunted content. ‘Soon you shall eat a little grass and drink a little water, and then we

must make for home. The ways of Providence are beyond me. The thrush I could bear to lose, for who would keep a wild thing from its haunt? The little bitch I should love to have kept, but if you don't think it uncivil of me, I am much puzzled what to do with a cow.' The cow lowed and turned her head towards him. 'Well, we shall come to an understanding, no doubt. Now, if you are ready, shall we proceed?'

'You know, cow,' said Goronwy later, 'I feel the day is by no means over for me.' The cow lowed. 'You are a most sensible cow, I must say. Yes, when I recall the events of the day, how I started off with thirty-one pounds and sixpence, and ransomed the thrush for sixpence, and the bitch for a pound, and you for the other thirty (and the beeswax and my waistcoat, though it is warm enough for me not to miss it, and don't for a minute think I begrudge it you), I feel there is a meaning yet to be made clear. Already here I am, talking as I have not talked for years, and only this morning I was the glummiest man alive. What do you make of it, cow?' The cow lowed. 'I am of your mind. We must wait and see. Perhaps we shall not wait long, for surely,' said Goronwy, as they were approaching Rhydfelyn, 'that is someone crying ahead, and someone else bullying. I have no longer a farthing in my pocket, but I think we should go ahead and look.' The cow lowed. 'You think I should pick up this ash-plant? Maybe you are right.'

And right she was, for when Goronwy turned the bend it was to find a man driving a frightened girl before him down the road. The man was big and strong, with black hair slicked down in front, and his paunch like a pear in his navy blue trousers, but the girl was small and tender, as though cut by nature for his chopping-block, and her face under its terror was meek.

'Bitch!' shouted the man. 'Cow that you are, to the poor-house with you, or follow the gipsies! Sing like a thrush for your living, for I have done with you.'

'Friend,' said Goronwy, 'what goes on here? Are you not treating this girl worse than she can bear?'

'Bear's the word,' he jeered. 'Let her bear her brat in the ditch, but first she'll bear the weight of my hand.' And he hit

her a great blow into the hedgerow. He would have hit her again but the cow had walked in between.

Goronwy felt his right hand and arm a-tremble. 'I know this child,' he said softly, 'and I know you. She is the orphan Mair, from Llanfair, and all she knows of arithmetic she owes to me. Why do you beat her?'

'Because she has brought shame on me who gave her a home and asked nothing but work in return. Because she is to bear a sailor's brat without a ring to her finger. If she can bear anything when I have finished with her!'

'Friend,' said Goronwy, 'you have finished with her now. What I am not sure of is whether I have finished with you. He looked over the cow's back to the girl. 'Who is the baby's dadda, little one? And who has done you wrong?'

'No wrong,' she sobbed. 'It was Lewsin Tirnant, but he went to the wars and was killed. There was no wrong. I loved him and he loved me.'

'He was another of the lonely ones,' said Goronwy. 'Like you he had no dad and mam. I have seen and heard too much to-day of the world's stoats and barrators. Cow, keep watch on the child, for I have work to do.'

The next moment he was sprawling in the dust. 'He'll kill you,' screamed the girl, as Blackhair drew back his heavy boot. But on that stroke of time, as Blackhair's boot swung in the balances of assault, a thin-faced brindled bitch jumped through the hedge and bit him in the calf. He turned bawling, but the bitch slashed his other calf. And now Goronwy was on his feet again, swinging his great cudgel. 'One,' he said, 'for this girl you have so cruelly dealt with!'—and he landed a bone-cracker on his right shoulder. 'And one,' he chanted, 'for Lewsin Tirnant, who was a good but lonely boy!'—and he bowed him groundwards with a gut-melter on the left. 'And finally,' he sang aloud, 'one for the babe unborn!'—and he gave him so gruesome a whack on his skull that the echo of it crackled round the hills like thunder and Blackhair rolled three times over to end on his back in the road. And straightway Goronwy sat on Blackhair's belly as on a throne and embraced the little bitch, while the cow came over and ate of his adversary's hair.

'But it is time for home,' cried Goronwy, 'for all of us save this heap of vomit here. You, cow, whom henceforward I shall call Megan, will lead the way, and you, little bitch, who shall from this day forth be called Betsi, shall follow behind her. And last will come Mair, leaning on my arm where the way is steep. Are you crying still? There is nothing to fear. Look on me, child, an old man they call nuts, and see whether I am not much more in need of you all than you of me.' He felt his load of loneliness fall from him as trust and happiness grew in her face. 'And when the child is born, if he is a boy we shall call him Lewsin, and if a girl, Lewsina—my own invention!' They began to walk. 'I thank the Lord that I am better treated than Elijah. For he had but ravens to feed him, and I have a cow and dog. If I had my thrush, my cup would be running over.'

'Your thrush?' she asked.

'It is nothing,' he said regretfully. 'Ah me!'

The quiet blue of the evening was all about them as they passed through the black farmsteads and pink cottages of Rhydfelyn. The cow mooed with contralto satisfaction, the little bitch talked in her throat. Soon they had entered upon the path to the lower slopes of Goleufryn. 'The house,' he cried, pointing. 'Oh, how friendly it looks to-night!' The bitch barked joyously, and a stream of golden melody poured down the hillside to meet them. 'It's Dicky Thrush,' he gasped. 'Look—he's perching on Megan's back!'

Megan lowing, Betsi barking, Dicky Thrush singing, they bent their knees to the incline. One last gleam of sunlight broke from over the darkening sea, and as they threaded the lichen-draped green walls, and Mair leaned on Goronwy's aching, proud arm, it was a little house of gold which laughed its welcome from the hill.

BOOKS AND THINGS

ALEC DAVIS

THE standard of appearance of books produced in this country has risen greatly in the last two decades. (I mean, of course, books that are intended to be read, not books produced for collectors who seldom read). Even the inferior paper and the narrow margins that the war forced on British publishers cannot hide the fact that a better range of type-faces is being put to better use to-day. The evidence is available—indeed, it is obvious—in any well-stocked library or bookshop.

What may be less obvious is that the improvement in book-design is not an isolated phenomenon but part of a general trend towards better design. More critical attention is being given to the appearance of the other man-made possessions, as well as books, that surround even the least materialistic of us. It is now widely realized that, just as the best book by even the greatest author is made more attractive when it is printed in handsome type and pleasing format, so any manufactured article, to be regarded as the best of its kind, must be the best-designed. Quality of material and—the traditional British virtue—quality of workmanship are diminished in value if they are not employed efficiently and imaginatively. It is the designer's task to see that they are so employed. There is a growing demand, which even shortages cannot altogether conceal, for our everyday things to be well-designed. Because so many of these things are made in factories, the present interest in their design concerns the production-line at least as much as the craftsman's bench. (The book-lover should be the last person to look down his nose at machine production: for what was the first purpose of the printing press but to produce books in greater quantity, more cheaply and more quickly than the scribes could write them?)

Good design has an important part to play in the economic well-being of British industry, on which depends the economic well-being of the nation; but it has also a deeper and more

lasting significance. Indeed, as Mr. John Grey pointed out recently,¹ 'it may well be that too much stress is being laid on the economic aspect of the matter and too little on the cultural, since design is not only an aid to material prosperity but, what is far more important, an antidote to materialism.' If people generally will think more about the fitness and the beauty of their possessions, and less about their showiness and the sheer quantity of them, then our civilization may yet escape from the materialistic grip that threatens to choke the life out of it. With a more enlightened attitude towards design, the ambition to own a louder radiogram and a shinier Chrysler than one's neighbour may cease to be the dominating force in a million lives that it is to-day.

Probably it is too much to hope that such a change of heart can take place suddenly. But there are reasons why industrial design demands *urgent* attention here and now. The Industrial Revolution left Britain a heritage of material prosperity (for some people) and a degraded design-tradition. The prosperity isn't so conspicuous as it used to be; much of the degradation remains. Other countries, more recently industrialized, have had the benefit of our experience, and some of them have learned to set a higher æsthetic standard in their industrial products than ours commonly reach. Sheer economic pressure demands that we lessen this handicap to our trade: a handicap that is felt chiefly in overseas markets at present but must be felt strongly in the home market also when foreign goods are again on sale, side by side with British goods, in the shops of this country.

The last few years have been full of difficulties for the manufacturer: just as there has been a shortage of paper for the making of books, so there have been shortages of essential materials for other industries. But there have also been opportunities, not all of which have been neglected. The reconversion of industry from war to peace production gave scope for the introduction of new and better design; so did the introduction of new plant and new processes developed during the war. And Nazism drove out of Europe some brilliant designers who have found a place in our industries,

¹ *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects*, Jan. 1948.

contributing directly the products of their own special ability and indirectly a stimulus to native talent in design. Moreover, the design-minded manufacturer can, for the first time in Britain's long industrial history, seek advice and information from a Government-sponsored organization established 'to promote by all practicable means the improvement of design in the products of British industry'—the Council of Industrial Design, set up in 1944 by the President of the Board of Trade.

For better-designed goods, when at last we at home can see them, there should be no lack of demand, for the public has already shown in several ways a heightened appreciation of the visual arts. Perhaps our educational system is at last shaking off its traditional literary bias and giving more attention to other arts; I do not know. But whatever the reason, people *are* responsive to-day to the pleasures of the eye. Broadcasts and lectures and books on the arts are reaching a wide audience; the attendance at art exhibitions is unwontedly high (van Gogh, the National Gallery's cleaned pictures, etc); and smaller shows like the National Book League's exhibitions of book design and the Arts Council's travelling exhibition of Danish domestic design have been well supported. Indeed, there is a danger that the demand for good design will outstrip industry's willingness to supply it, rather than the reverse. But even this danger may be averted, if not because worshippers of Mammon change overnight into worshippers of Beauty, then through the effects on the older, obstructive industrialists of Nature, operating (in the words of Mr. John Gloag) 'through the climate of these islands and the inevitable senescence that awaits us all'.

NEW FILMS IN NEW YORK

MOURNING BECOMES ELECTRA. Directed by DUDLEY NICHOLS from the play by EUGENE O'NEILL. Screen play by DUDLEY NICHOLS. With Michael Redgrave, Rosalind Russell, Katina Paxinou, Raymond Massey, Leo Genn. Produced by Dudley Nichols in association with the Theatre Guild, Inc. At Golden Theatre, West 49th Street.

THE FUGITIVE. Directed by JOHN FORD. From the novel *The Labyrinthine Years*, by GRAHAM GREENE. With Henry Fonda, Dolores del Rio, Pedro Armendariz, Leo Carillo. At the Victoria, Broadway.

GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT. Screen play by Moss HART, from LAURA HOBSON's novel of the same name. With Gregory Peck, Dorothy McGuire, Celeste Holm, John Garfield. At the Mayfair, Broadway.

THE TYCOON. Directed by RICHARD WALLACE. With John Wayne, Judith Anderson, Cedric Hardwicke, Laraine Day. R.K.O. Palace, Broadway.

Also **THE BISHOP'S WIFE; GOOD NEWS; PIRATES OF MONTEREY; CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE.**

I DID not see the film that was on at Radio City just after Christmas. I went there, but what I saw was . . . well! A Donald Duck ended as we went in. Or was it a news-reel? If I am confused it is because of what came after. We heard strains—those strains as inevitable at Christmas-time in New York as lighted trees . . . they peal from the carillon on the Empire State building, choirboys sang them each hour at Grand Central station . . . the strains of *Heilige Nacht*. As they developed we saw, not without surprise, that behind and above us, on tiers at each side of the auditorium, were Shepherds singing. Swiftly we realized that Radio City Music-Hall was staging a Nativity play. Each Shepherd had a crook in one hand and a microphone in the other. Moreover, each Shepherd had also a Shepherdess. Shall I repeat that? Believe it or not, each Shepherd had also a Shepherdess. All that was missing were sheep. But there was plenty of livestock on the stage, for the Three Wise Kings travelled in state. They had such retinues that 'No wonder there was no room at the inn'

remarked my companion 'if all these had to be housed'. The Star moved across the sky—but it was a blonde's face singing. Then the gates of Bethlehem opened, to reveal the Crib, with life-sized wax figures.

After this, with no apparent break, we were treated to the legend of Jack Frost who, it seems, was cold because he wanted romance. This was to be supplied by the Sleeping Princess. Her arrival on a sleigh enabled Rocettes, to the tune of three dozen, to prance on and do that all-too-well-known dance as ponies; to the tune of *Jingle Bells*. And then there were some dreary men with a performing dog, and one way and another you will understand why we didn't wait to see the film, which was *Good News*, that old musical comedy.

At the other end of the scale was *Shoe Shine*, that magnificent Italian picture, so movingly acted, which may now be seen at the Carlton in Tottenham Court Road. In New York it was at as small a house and in much the same district. Sad fodder for those who persist in taking a gloomy view of the public taste!

For the rest, I concentrated on films which I thought were unlikely to be seen over here. That is, new American films. One which had been much acclaimed and was taken from a best-selling novel, was *Gentlemen's Agreement*. This is a story of anti-semitism—anti anti-semitism. I saw it on Broadway on a Saturday night, which meant I was surrounded by Jews who took all the points and chuckled over the exposure of the many subtle indignities to which they are subjected in practically every country, America no less so than here. All the same, I did not think it a good film. It was competently made, but a film of this nature needs inspiration if it is to escape preaching. Gregory Peck does not impress me as an actor and as a journalist who pretends he is a Jew in order to get the low-down on anti-semitism from the inside, he was hampered by a screen mother who called him 'Son', bit back her tears with a smile and when he said 'Gee, Mom, you don't know what it means to me! If I can get this straight!', would reply, ablaze with mother-love, 'You will, Son, you will.' All this I found hard to stomach. It is undeniably interesting that Hollywood should have made a film on this subject and that audiences should queue in the snow to see it, but I could not rid myself of the

feeling that it was part of a 'movement', *le mouvement*. Along with Sinclair Lewis's not-good *Kingsblood Royal*, which deals with Negro persecution, it is what is being 'done' this year, as witness also *Crossfire*. Religion, also, is very much 'in', and after I left there came on Walter Colmer's *The Burning Cross*, a film dealing with the Ku Klux Klan.

The critics of New York had given *Gentlemen's Agreement* an award as the best film of the year, but as a piece of film-making I found *The Fugitive* far better. This is directed by John Ford, who has clearly learnt a lot from Eisenstein. Graham Greene's story has almost disappeared under Dudley Nichols's screenplay, and I seem to have seen Henry Fonda being chased just once too often. Nevertheless, *The Fugitive* has magnificent camera-work, and from start to finish has authority and the air of being made by a man who knows what film is for. It has also an actor, Pedro Armendariz, who brought a flash of life to the film at moments when it was perhaps becoming static.

There is nothing static about *The Tycoon*, which is one of those outdoor technicolour pictures in regions where men are men, and therefore, apparently behave like animals. I went to it primarily because the cast included Judith Anderson whom I had seen the night before in *Medea*, and I wanted to convince myself that she really did look like that. She did. Between *Medea* and twentieth-century housekeeper to Sir Cedric Hardwicke, which was her role in the film, there was no difference—to the eye. Sir Cedric was the tycoon, who objected to his daughter marrying his engineer. This was John Wayne, not my favourite actor. He had contracted to make a tunnel through a mountain. But when, through lack of money, the tunnel fell in on his pal, he built a bridge instead. Why the alternative to tunnelling through a mountain was to build a bridge over a river was not clear to me, nor did I understand why it was necessary for everyone to behave so rudely. The standard of behaviour in this film was about as low as in *Build My Gallows High*, where men and women slap each other about as we would shake hands, and hurl insults at each other in the ordinary exchange of conversation.

The characters were pretty rude, too, in *Mourning Becomes Electra*. This plodding play does not, I feel, make a good

picture. It goes on too long, and the characters 'go on' too much. You cannot, for more than two hours, both listen and look at characters being intolerable to each other—especially if one of them is la Paxinou, who on this occasion at least seemed to be giving an imitation of a Central European star at her worst. Rosalind Russell came near to outdoing her in vituperation, but one really felt that none of them could really have endured each others' company all those years. Redgrave did well with his part of Orin, and there is no denying that to make such a film, from such a play, on such a theme, was an experiment on which all concerned, including the indefatigable Mr. Dudley Nichols, may be congratulated. But the fact remains, that I did not stay to the end. I crept out, wondering why in a house of that size there were no servants to open the front or attend to the chores, and this was not, I fancy, the impression that should have been left on me. I am sorry not to go into any of these films in detail, but it seemed to me better to cover as many as I could, and space is limited. *The Bishop's Wife* is another of those pieces in which an angel comes down to earth. In this instance the angel is Cary Grant. There were quite a number of costume pieces in colour, the sort in which you are sure to find Douglas Fairbanks Jr. or Tyrone Power. I thought the sound-reproduction was much better than ours, but the cinemas themselves, and the uniforms of the attendants, far below London standards, even to-day, and none, not even the Normandie, equal to the Carib, Kingston, Jamaica.

The general cry among filmgoers was 'How good British films are!' and certainly a number were showing—*Captain Boycott*, *Great Expectations*—'the cast is quite wonderful', says the *New Yorker*—*Nicholas Nickleby*, *Brief Encounter*, *Dead of Night*, *Storm in a Teacup*, *The Seventh Veil*, *Odd Man Out*, *I Know Where I'm Going*. There were also most of the Continental ones—two Cocteus, *Vivere in Pace*, *La Maternelle*, *Mayerling*, *Carnet du Bal*, and a French version of *Volpone*, with Harry Baur and Jovet, billed as 'the bawdiest show in town'. Finally, there was *Jamaica Problem*, and this picture will be reviewed in our April issue by our film critic, who has lately been there.

ROBERT HERRING

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

THE SHOWMAN OF VANITY FAIR. LIONEL STEVENSON.
Chapman and Hall. 21s. 6d.

IN this biography of Thackeray, Mr. Stevenson gives an admirable record of what the great novelist did and said, with here and there an astute observation on some trait or motive, but he does not venture into criticism of Thackeray's works nor does he give any general summing up of his personality. His method is to convey an idea of the man by the cumulative force of many facts—facts about money, meetings, itineraries, and so on. It grows perhaps a little tedious, this filling in of every nook and cranny of the chronicle, as if by conscientiously sealing up the tower the elusive spirit dwelling there could be captured. Nevertheless, an impression does emerge; we feel it over as if we had caught it in Blind Man's Buff, but it is there—Thackeray, the kind, generous, easy living, harassed, suffering satirist, a personality of strength with many weaknesses, a life full of short enmities and long friendships. And this objective method can, as here, be a very fair way of dealing with a life that is well documented but open to many nuances of interpretation.

There is something sadly modern about the struggles and humiliations that Thackeray went through as a free-lance journalist in the ten years between the wasting of his fortune and the success of *Vanity Fair*. Change the names and the whole account could be put forward a hundred years and read pretty well. Would Thackeray, I wonder, have found us less touchy than his contemporaries? Would he have felt at home with us, appreciated by us? He found the Americans more easy-going and liked them. 'The jolly manner answers here very well, which I have from Nature or Art possibly,' he wrote. The fact remains, however, that he felt the strongest attraction always for the rarefied air of the English upper class. Its social claims upon him made his work a drag and a torment but without them he felt he could not work at all. I am sure he could not but notice if he lived in our time that the jam of culture is

being spread very thin now in an effort to give everyone a share.

But even apart from this, I think he would not have felt happy and welcome with us, and mainly for the reason that humour and sentiment have exchanged functions in the last hundred years. Thackeray's sense of humour constantly got him into trouble with his friends, but it was genuine sentiment that got him out. Nowadays, we do not own to sentiment; it is our sense of humour that smooths out awkward situations, patches up personal relationships and chases petty irritations. To be accused of lacking a sense of humour is a very serious matter, as then it would have been very serious to be charged with lack of sentiment. But our sense of humour spends itself so on practical things (God knows it's needed there!) that it has no strength left for intellectual pleasures. Who knows how many Thackerays of to-day will never struggle out of the hack stage, because they cannot flourish in a world that reverences nothing and dare not take itself seriously?

Not that Thackeray found it easy to express his feelings. His early separation from home and mother and the brutalizing he suffered at Charterhouse produced in him that typically English attitude of hiding his feelings behind a show of detached amusement. This is the very basis of his satire. The stronger the sentiment, the more forceful the wit that disguised it, so that many thought him cynical and insincere. For instance, for the opening of the great International Exhibition Thackeray spent five days wrestling with an *Ode*, a serious piece of work which *The Times* printed; but there appeared the same week in *Punch* a comic poem on the same subject under his well-known pseudonym of 'Mr. Molony'.

His wit is often thought nowadays to be too heavily facetious; a reading of his life helps towards a better understanding of his artistic intentions. Mr. Stevenson's biography convinces me of the sincerity of Thackeray's own words—'that under the mask satirical there walks about a sentimental gentleman, who means not unkindly to any mortal person . . .'

GWEN MARSH

MACBETH. Edited by JOHN DOVER WILSON. The New Shakespeare. Cambridge University Press. 8s. 6d.

Macbeth is the second of the great tragedies to appear in the New Shakespeare edition, and Dr. Dover Wilson admits that he has found it a difficult play to edit. The acute depression that I felt when I perused this volume prompted me to the conclusion that Dr. Wilson had indeed found it just a little too difficult and, after a good deal of earnest thought, I must still pronounce this a disappointing recension. In all fairness, however, I freely admit that I may be blinded by personal heresies. My own attempts to tackle the *Macbeth* problems have led me to conclusions widely different from Dr. Wilson's, so that the ingeniously integrated pattern which he presents does not seem to me to carry truth on the face of it.

The long introduction, which runs to eighty-two pages, falls into three sections, each one illustrative of the attractions and the dangers of the Dover Wilson method. Let us isolate one or two points.

In the section entitled 'The Macbeth myth, and what Shakespeare owes to it', Dr. Wilson traces the growth of the myth through successive chronicles. Naturally, he accepts Holinshed as Shakespeare's main source but, following Mrs. Stopes, submits that William Stewart's *Buik of the Croncilis of Scotland* afforded additional material. This seems very probable, but it raises its own problem. Stewart's book remained in manuscript until 1858. How then could Shakespeare lay hands on a copy?

Well, in his next section, 'The Three *Macbeths*,' Dr. Wilson finds that Shakespeare wrote *Macbeth* round about 1601. Its compliments to King James then were actually penned during the reign of Elizabeth. English comedians were in Scotland from 1599 onwards. They *may* have played *Macbeth* in Edinburgh. Shakespeare *may* have been with them. He *may* have read Stewart's chronicle in Edinburgh. This *may* have been the 'Scottis Chronicle, wrettin with hand' listed among King James's books. It is all very pretty, of course, but it can hardly be claimed that 'truths are told as happy prologues to the swelling act of the imperial theme'. Together with its attendant inferences, it seems to me merely to advance the

Shakespeare myth and not to contribute soberly to fact. The evidence for early dating is, after all, extremely tenuous, and verbal similarities between the Bleeding Sergeant scene and the Pyrrhus speech in *Hamlet* prove nothing about propinquity of dates, for in both passages Shakespeare is deliberately affecting an outmoded style. The obvious conclusion, if any conclusion could be drawn, would be that both passages were penned round about 1585!

Dr. Wilson proceeds to develop the theory that this earlier *Macbeth* contained scenes dealing with actions antecedent to Macbeth's encounter with the Weird Sisters. Whether one sees eye to eye with him depends entirely on one's attitude to the alleged 1601 play. It may, however, be noted that the 1611 version at the Globe, as described by Simon Forman, is essentially the same as the Court version of 1606 as preserved in the First Folio. It seems to me unlikely that so brief a text, however much revised, would supplant the full-length play on the public stage.

Certain of the more strictly literary judgments in these earlier sections seem open to question. The Hecate scenes, for example, are confidently assigned to Middleton, and Dr. Wilson does not advance the inquiry beyond the limits reached by Victorian critics. Yet the present-day attitude to Middleton is that he was an incomparably greater dramatic poet than Victorian estimates allowed, so that one is compelled to ask whether he can justly be charged with that wholesale betrayal of Shakespeare's artistry that the Hecate scenes seem to imply. The passages in question are in fact so commonplace that they could have been written by almost anybody from William Shakespeare down to squeaking Cleopatra.

Again, it is discouraging to find the Witches, Weird Sisters, or What You Will interpreted in terms of the effete hermeneutics of Coleridge and Lamb. In Dr. Wilson's third section, 'The Tragedy of *Macbeth*' this tendency to reiterate the Romantics results in a good deal of literary chit-chat. From the dubious assumption that 'Macbeth was no criminal to start with but an honourable soldier', Dr. Wilson proceeds to trace his spiritual development. In the fourteen pages given

over to this task I recognize certain credible conclusions, but precisely how these conclusions are reached I am at a loss to say. I am searching all the time for a central pattern: Holinshed, Shakespeare, the Globe, the Folio. This pattern must, I think, be there, but so far I have failed to isolate it from a mass of paraphrase and a bewildering collocation of names:—Coleridge, Stoll, Bradley, Dostoieffsky, Raskolnikoff, Milton, Marlowe, Curry, Lucifer, and Walter Raleigh.

Dr. Wilson is not the first critic to attempt a broad analogy between *Macbeth* and *Paradise Lost*. We may grant that this procedure, however irrelevant, is permissible since it involves two of the greatest utterances in world literature, both of which are, moreover, subjectively perplexing. But frankly I cannot see that any useful purpose is served by taking Macbeth's behaviour and setting it alongside selected attributes of Milton's devils. If there is any analogy to be drawn it is surely between two human beings, between Macbeth and Adam. Adam, we find, was 'not of Woman born', and, just as Macbeth, on some occasion, was 'too full o' th' milk of human kindness', so in Adam,

'compassion quell'd
His best of Man.'

Macbeth and Adam are, after all, the two characters who embrace sin with tragic consequences; Lady Macbeth and Eve the potent agents of temptation. The moral of all this is, I think, that where there's a will there's a way. I cannot see that it has much application to Milton, or any at all to Shakespeare.

It is in the more specialized part of his task that Dr. Dover Wilson comes into his own. He offers his reader what is, on the whole, a soundly conservative text, refreshingly free from the kind of conjectural emendations that any play, whose sole authority is the Folio unfortunately invites. There is an admirable glossary and the annotations are excellent. In conformity with his normal practice, Dr. Wilson adds an analysis of the copy for the 1623 Folio. Two points here seem rather perverse. He describes l. 6 as 'the one, sunlit scene of the play' and finds the direction *Hoboyes and Torches* absurd. Yet

what reason have we for supposing that Duncan arrived at Inverness in broad daylight? 'The kind comes here *to-night*.' Simon Forman testifies that he did so. Secondly, 'it is possible that the seeming tautology in iii, ii, 50-1,

. . . the crow
Makes wing to th' rooky wood.

should be set down to an actor's account.' Comment is superfluous.

It is difficult to arrive at any final judgment about this curiously uneven edition. I am led, indeed, to wonder whether the Cambridge 'New' Shakespeare has shot its bolt. Oh, when he was man alive, wrote with bewitching gusto about the comedies. His introductions, let us admit, were not very profound, not very original, not always very scholarly, but they were, unquestionably, both pleasing and infectious. Dr. Dover Wilson, turning recent thrilling discoveries to good account, tackled the various texts with great energy and acumen, so that the two partners gave us comedy upon comedy as we liked it. Now Dr. Wilson is left to battle alone with Shakespeare's most profound, yet most intractable, creations and to present them in an edition whose scope seems suddenly, quite inadequate. The tragedies, unlike the comedies, are not matter for charming little editions. Moreover, my fears in Dr. Wilson stick deep, and I feel that even his great scholarship, greater ingenuity, and enthusiasm, greatest of all, are powerless in the face of Shakespeare's tragic genius. Certainly, when *King Lear* and *Othello* rear up their Hydra heads they will require more solid fare than regurgitated scraps of Coleridge and Lamb. I hope that my fears may prove unfounded.

JAMES M. NOSWORTHY

ESSAYS FROM EIGHTEENTH CENTURY PERIODICALS. Edited by M. G. SEGAR. Methuen. 5s.

THIRTY-FOUR essays from fifteen eighteenth-century periodicals are brought together in a book as entertaining for the general reader as it is instructive for the student. All the great

names are here—Steele, Addison, Johnson, Fielding, Goldsmith. Even so, Pope stands out with his noble paper on 'Cruelty to Animals'—'Almost as soon as we are sensible what Life is ourselves, we make it our Sport to take it from other Creatures.' The volume promotes reflection as a cross-section of English prose from 1709-1787. It reminds us of the high aims, and even higher fulfilment, which animated these first *Tatlers*, *Spectators* and the rest, and in giving a picture of the development of the English periodical, it presents us in passing with contemporary comments and criticism on the life of the time. For any of these points, it is well worth the modest price. The editor furnishes introduction and notes.

TREVOR JAMES

SWISS ESSAYS. LLEWELYN POWYS. John Lane. 15s.

ON ROCK AND ICE. ANDRÉ ROCH. A. and C. Black. 21s. ANY book which suggests a fresh reaction to Switzerland and the Swiss is worth more than a passing glance. It seems difficult, after all, to imagine any original thought on the country being squeezed between de Beer's studies, the researches of the Coolidges and the Freshfields, Lunn's little books, and the vast agglomeration of climbing literature. Yet Powys finds the fresh approach and, in his own peculiar prose, elaborates it successfully.

At first it might appear that these short studies which he was still arranging when he died are not Swiss essays but country essays written in Switzerland; there is the expected preoccupation with the earth, the rich things that sprout from it, the sun, the turning stars, and the people who do the only incontestably right job in the world. With some moulding of the mountains this might, one could say, be Powys' own Dorset.

Yet this is not quite true. It is not merely that he deals with physical things entirely Swiss in some of his essays, with marmots and mountain foxes, chamois, alpine blizzards, and ancient mountain pieties. Taken separately, these notes would be pleasant feather-down commentaries; read as a whole, as part of a collection that contains more basic details of Swiss life than one at first suspects, notes on Kirchner and

studies of Paracelsus and Zwingli, a dozen odd glosses on Swiss custom and usage, read thus they suggest that Switzerland had some fascination for Powys quite different from that which attracted other men. They suggest that he saw here, between the neat towns and the mountains, some method of living that was almost perfect and that most men had little chance of leading.

His prose is a little tortuous, a little involved, and somewhat reminiscent of C. E. Montague in his more embroidered and less sub-edited moments. 'The frenzied dance of matter' he writes, 'from cottage to cosmos, has been potent for all time to create, with careless prodigality, sprightly, slothful, intricate, infinitesimal, and monstrous manifestations of life.' Yet with queer words and strange phrases his sentences—when one has unravelled them—do summon up the picture of man living his short wistful life beneath what another Powys called 'the unimplicated stars'.

Perhaps that is why an immense labouring sadness clings to his descriptions, even of such a happy life. 'All that we experience here on earth is a kind of pageantry of laughter and tears' he says, 'a parade of mockery, misery, and mirth, of no lasting design.'

The photographs in this book are remarkable. Most of them were specially taken by H. Rivers Pollock, an old friend of Powys who describes them as 'complementary'. They are used, in fact, not to illustrate but stress and drive home a point. One of them, by Meerkämper, showing a funeral procession in the Alps, is the loveliest thing of its kind I have seen for many years.

The photographs in M. Andre Roch's book have different qualities. For they are, in spite of the shadows on the snow and the sunlight on the rocks, as instructive as beautiful, though it may be almost mountain heresy to say so.

Roch has chosen these eighty-one photographs, thirty-nine of them his own and the rest chosen from the work of other Continental photographers, to illustrate three things. First, 'the ideal training medium' of limestone rock; then 'the alpine paradises where the climber can complete his training'; and, finally, 'the classical climbs of higher mountains'. The

majority are therefore a cross between the analytical illustration of the small severe climbing guide and the panorama of the more elaborate descriptive book. They have, possibly for this reason, a queer bastard magnificence. Few, incidentally, are likely to be familiar to readers in this country.

'They are,' says Mr. Smythe in his foreword, 'sensational pictures' and most of them give, better even than those of Abrahams or Collingwood, the sense of depth, the feel of exposure. Many of them indicate how the chinks in a great mountain's protections may be discovered, the strategy of attack planned, the tactical plan executed; the captions are more informative than is usual in books of this kind. The mention, however, of rockets and similar bow-and-arrow techniques, reminiscent of the tower of King's Chapel, will be a little distressing to the more conservative climber; the uninitiated reader may be confirmed in his belief that mountaineers are apt to be a little queer.

Nevertheless, as a book illustrating the most difficult of the newer rock-climbs and some of the classic longer routes, 'On Rock and Ice' is the best book that has been published in this country for many years.

As a thing of beauty, it raises interesting questions. Most of the illustrations lack the texture found in Smythe's photographs and, even more, the quality of the earlier mountain photographs that to-day appears so elusive. The printer of contemporary books may be partly to blame for this, but it is curious that the mountain atmosphere in the work of such men as Donkin, Sella, Eccles, A. B. W. Kennedy, and Sydney Spencer, is so difficult to recapture. Comparison of the best modern work with such books as the 1902 reprint of Moore's journal or de Filippi's 'Karakoram and Western Himalaya' (the first illustrated mainly by Kennedy, the second by Sella) will demonstrate the point.

Perhaps it is that the first mountain photographers—like Smythe in his best moments—had both the ability and the time to select, omit, and concentrate. When the illustrations in M. Roch's book do so, as in their photographs of climbing detail, they reach nearer to the quality of the early masters.

RONALD W. CLARK

UNWIN

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THE MOUNTAINS SHALL BRING PEACE. R. L. G.

IRVING. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1947. 2s. 6d.

IN a well known and much discussed passage of *The Romance of Mountaineering* Mr. R. L. G. Irving stated his faith as a mountaineer in these words: 'There are no moments that stand out in our long hours of glorious experience like those in which we came to some high point and, as we looked out over what was before us, we knew certainty, and doubt was impossible.' This little brochure is Mr. Irving's attempt to say more fully what that certainty is. 'It is hard to put it into words,' he wrote earlier; and there will be those who find what he here writes on the mountains as an educational influence, on a Mountain Home for chosen teachers, on the value of solitude in the hills, and on similar themes, better satisfying than his more definitely religious speculations. A great mountaineer himself, Mr. Irving has been a teacher of great mountaineers. His belief that 'the physical struggle and the contemplative aim are parts of one indivisible whole' is grounded in a lifetime of keen, resolute, testing experience. Even those who feel—with a critic he quotes—that this is 'mixing up mountaineering with religion' and who will want to quote Jeremiah 3, 23: 'Truly in vain is the help that is looked for from the hills, the tumult on the mountains'—will have no question about the depth and sincerity of his devotion. With his hopes that the discerning love of mountains may help the world towards the peace all long for, every reader will be in accord. And those who have not realized how seriously mountaineering can be taken will find much to surprise them in these pages.

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WHEN the rhythm of life was slower, when the working man had traditional exemption from labour on so many feast days and at times of local fairs (London's eight hanging days at Tyburn), the need was not felt for 'holidays' as we know them. Of course, the Grand Tour originated in Elizabethan times, but this was, primarily, a refinement of education; and as odds of five to three against travellers returning were laid in



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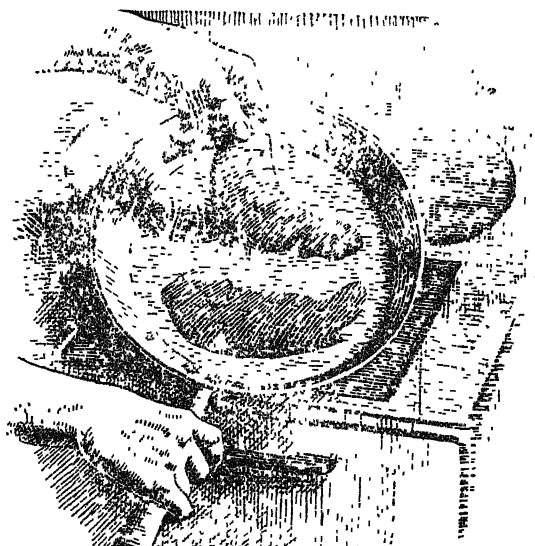
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the early seventeenth century, the tour could hardly be called a holiday in Mr. Cook's sense of the word. There were, of course, the famous spas such as Bath or Buxton, but taking the waters was a matter of social routine rather than a holiday; and when the genuine holiday resorts began to appear, places where men were fined a bottle of wine for going on the beach during the women's bathing hour, the spas were left to the ingredients of Pandora's box *personifie*, 'who stalk about, half-living remembrances of mortality.' So even at the time when Sir John Lubbock was skilfully camouflaging his 'Bank' holiday bill for 'Saint Lubbock's Day', *The Times* still referred to 'holydays'. The psychological necessity of holidays as we know them came only after full industrialization, with the new urban populations, with the general speed-up of the struggle for existence; and the introduction of railway travel gave the need its possibility of practical expression.

Mr. Pimlott provides us with a history of the modern paid holiday for Englishmen in all its fascinating details. He tells us how early employers argued that periods of unemployment were sufficient holiday for workers, he shows us how the poorer classes at first took over the traditions of their betters, the pier becoming the assembly room, and he outlines the effects of the new holiday traffic on the popular resorts, telling us that an old Blackpool boarding-house keeper, late in the nineteenth century, complained that his clients used to be content crammed a dozen in a bed 'but now they grumble if there is only five'. But, in taking history up to the present moment, the author leaves us with some alarming problems. How are the authorities going to organize travel facilities, catering, and accommodation for the increasing army of holiday makers?

It would surely be ironical if the holiday camp proved to be to-morrow's solution. The holiday, as we use the word to-day, became accepted because people recognized the need of the worker to have a breathing space in which he could recover some of his individuality and escape from some of the effects of 'modern times' in the factory. It would be sad if now the holiday, too, is to be regimented instead of being used for early ideals of self-discovery and adventure, study, and



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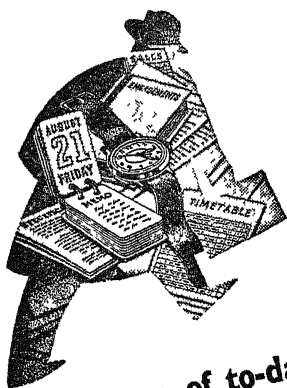
But Mr. Pimlott, who has a warm corner in his heart for Butlinism, would disagree; and, as he remarks, to ask what is the future of the Englishman's holiday is to ask what is the future of our society and our civilization.

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MODERN literature on Greece varies in style from the emotional outbursts of Henry Miller to the dispassionate comments of Hardy McNeil, both Americans. For the English a distinguished cartoonist now adds his 'description' in the vein of the 'old-fashioned' traveller. With remarkable energy Mr. Lancaster, in addition to his duties as Press Attaché during a very difficult period in Greece, managed to collect material for a book which is both informative and charmingly illustrated. His colour plates reproduce most effectively that austere but never drab countryside, where the outline is always sharp and the colours few but brilliant. Sometimes his pen-drawings seem to miss the character of a building, as in the case of the Church of the Holy Apostles at Salonika, where the almost mosaic tidyness of the famous brickwork is lost in a fussiness of detail. Again the chapel on Lycabettus is drawn from an angle which gives no impression of its precipitous site. His cartoons, on the other hand, provide a most lifelike picture of all who animate the Greek scene, from politician to muleteer. The Orthodox clergy he has treated just a little more flippantly than they deserve! Whatever their failings may be, at least these patriarchal figures, from 'His Beatitude' himself to the humblest village 'papa', all have great dignity of bearing. Greeks will laugh as much as anyone at the politicians and officials, but it is unlikely that they will tolerate, even from a cartoonist, what one of them described as the 'foreshortening' of their Archbishop!

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of squeamishness, which British officials seem to pick up in a surprisingly short time, the more gruesome aspects of Greek life are ruthlessly laid before us. The author's political outlook reflects the official view of the British Government whose policy he supports, and there will be many with experience of post-war Greece who find themselves in disagreement with some of his judgments.

Mr. Lancaster provides us with much detailed and interesting information on the country's architecture and customs. He is fascinated by Ali Pasha, moved to an almost poetical gloom by that most depressing of towns—Salonika—and often genuinely enthusiastic about his Byzantine and other discoveries. It is on such occasions that his descriptive writing is strongest and most spontaneous. At other times the caricaturist cannot resist parodying so it seems, the tedious style of a motorist's guide book and the fantastic language of a travel promoter who, in the interests of tourism, decides to 'hot up' the most venerated antiquities by introducing the familiar elements of popular appeal. There are moments too, when the author appears to be laughing at everyone except himself; the practical jokes even include an irresponsible mixing up of 'phobes' and 'phils', perhaps just to tease Greek readers! Yet this account of Greece is undoubtedly by far the most pleasing and entertaining of any published in English for years. It can hardly fail to stimulate an interest for Greece in those who as yet have not experienced that country's attractions. As for the already firmly established philhellenes, there will be few, if any, who will not want to add this book to their permanent collection.

NANCY CRAWSHAW

TRIAD TWO. Edited by JACK AISTROP. Dennis Dobson. 7s. 6d.

A GOOD alternative title for *Triad* if Mr. Aistrop ever needs one and if he would stoop to such plagiarism, would be G. K. Chesterton's *The Wrong Shape*. Mr. Aistrop edits *Triad* in order to bring before the public certain writings whose shape forbids appearance in any other format. Each number contains pieces which are too short to be published as novels and too long to appear in the normal run of magazines. Here, in



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short, is the platform for those writers who rebel at the curt demands either to pad out their work to a minimum of sixty thousand words or cut it down to a maximum of six thousand, a platform of integrity offered by a perceptive editor and publisher. As an experiment it has the right idea and deserves to succeed.

Yet, experimentally, it does not wholly succeed because the arbitrary arrangement of pieces by size is more suited for the vaults of the British Museum (where I believe it works admirably) than for the covers of a modern book. Three chunks of this nature lack the diversity of a magazine whilst never achieving the unity of one conception. *States of Mind*, stories and poems by John Atkins stimulates by opening the door to the marvellous, and the short novel, *This Very Sun*, by Edith Heal stimulates by opening the door to scepticism. On the other hand, *The Gibsons of Glasgow*, by Dorothy K. Haynes, frets and worries one to exasperation. The other two were all right because although they were the wrong shape for anywhere but *Triad*, they were the right shapes themselves and *Triad* offered them to us as such. But *The Gibsons of Glasgow* needs to be four times its present length. Extended to any length it will remain gritty; a social perception indicting a gritty state of things in the world, but at its present length it remains one of the few such perceptions which lose rather than gain impact by compression. Misery is more telling in its impact if it spreads and seeps through sixty thousand words, instead of being compressed into the chronicle form ('and then . . . and then . . . and then . . .') dictated by fifteen thousand words. Sorry, but I am definitely of the opinion that one third of *Triad Two* is the wrong shape.

F. J. BROWN

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who tries to establish mystical rapport with a dying octopus, and another tells of soldiers cutting into little pieces the bodies of dead Japs in a watch tower. Certainly, the unusual helps Mr. Payne to be distinguished, for he writes with a careful love for the detail of the elaborate moment. His book is haunting, but perhaps not sufficiently haunted. There are times when the reader is conscious of the author as scholar and traveller who sets out to construct the macabre rather than to record his experience of it.

Mr. Urquhart's art is to take the usual incident and make it, by what seems to be effortless writing, something as memorable as Mr. Payne's beautiful Tibetan lad who has the blue skin of Krishna in the yak-dung firelight. In this book, typists think and speak like typists, and startle us by being so essentially typist. For the author has wit (which makes an implicit comment), a natural ear for dialogue (which also works an unsuspected magic), and an instinct for significant selection from the usual which allows him to make the best use of his considerable gifts. The mistake here was to include stories which burlesque the American plain-and-tough school, and these stories leave the reader with an uneasy feeling that Mr. Urquhart has burlesqued his own skill of under-writing.

But both books are distinguished, and worthy of more than passing-through-the-bookshop notice.

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book lacks fire and actuality. The reader is not sufficiently made aware of the passionate convergence of Indians to Benares, nor that a deep human instinct demands pilgrimage and the sufferings of pilgrimage as a form of the expressing of its belief. Irish Lough Derg, the pilgrims circling on their knees is not named; no account is given of Lourdes.

The author justly notes that the truce of God, which used to be proclaimed to protect strangers who arrived in Greece during the great ancient festivals, has no counterpart in modern times, therefore during modern periods of war Lourdes and Rome are cut off from the faithful. The author holds that the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior is the pattern of the pilgrimages of the future. Of this Warrior, Mr. Wethered writes: 'He enjoys no powers of a supernatural order, but has been unofficially canonised by popular consent for heroic deeds generally attributed to him.'

Mr. Wethered instances Monsieur Deladier's solemn pilgrimage to the Arc de Triomphe in 1938.

Mr. Wethered is to be congratulated upon his apposite and extensive references to a variety of authors of all ages; his book is excellently printed by the Camelot Press.

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